

“COBBLERS” COME A CROPPER.

From the moment the ball was set in motion by Bowen on Monday evening it was clear that the struggle would be as fiercely fought as any game of recent years. Hundreds of supporters came with Northampton and anticipated success, but the “Cobblers” were not nearly so good a team as that which beat Luton by 6—5 on Boxing Day. Though their defensive parts were strong, the attack was but a shadow, and, with the exception of Bowen, gave little trouble. In the first half Luton were by far the better side. They took the game in hand early on, and attacked with great spirit. The complete change that had been made in the middle line was a striking success, and every man played so well that one wondered if they could keep it up to the end.

Apart from occasional raids by Bowen and Fraser little was seen of the “Cobblers’” attack. Save a brilliant effort by Odell, and a fine attempt by Bowen, there was little anxiety for Abbott, his backs keeping a tight hold on the opposition. On the other hand, the Town attacked persistently, and with a little more coolness might have had a safe

margin before the change of ends. Play was very vigorous, and Smith and Fraser on the one side, and Fulton, Yardley and Woods on the other side, had to be assisted from the field for treatment. There were three scrimmages in the Northampton goal area when goals seemed certain, but the ball was scrambled clear. Rennie had desperate luck, two headers hitting the bar and a beautiful shot striking the upright.

THE GOAL.

Many free kicks were given and many corners fell to Luton before a goal was scored. The success was the outcome of a nippy bit of work by the home inside forwards, and when the ball was tapped forward YARDLEY slipped in and shot gently into the net as the goalkeeper came out. Hammond seemed to kick Yardley when the referee had turned his back, and the Luton player had to be carried off. There was a prolonged and fierce demonstration against Hammond after this, and Maloney also, when Fulton was hurt in a collision with the visitors' centre-half and had to go to the rails for trainer's medicine. Several times before the change of ends Luton were within an ace of increasing the lead but failed, and the change came with the score:—

LUTON	1
NORTHAMPTON	0

For a considerable period of the second half Northampton pressed consistently, and the Luton team took a long time to get going. However, Abbott was seldom in real danger, and there were several raids to the other end that promised well but fizzled out. The biggest scare Luton had was when Bowen dashed through after a long pass forward that found the Town backs far apart. Abbott started out and then ran back when it appeared he could have taken possession by going to the edge of the penalty area. Bowen went ahead in businesslike fashion, and when he shot at close range there was a groan from the Town supporters, but Abbott managed to parry the shot: Richards and Graham promptly nailed Bowen when that player recovered the ball; as he shot it struck Richards and went to the right, to be scrambled away. From that point Luton never looked back. They made many assaults, and eventually a dash by Yardley brought a free kick through Brett bringing him down near the penalty area. Rennie's free kick was deflected to the right, and the ball was pushed forward; Yardley ran in and headed goalwards as he was brought down heavily, and WOODS headed into the net. Yardley was again carried off, his face being damaged, but was soon back again. The remainder of the play found the home team well holding their own, and just before the close Northampton's goal had narrow squeaks, Rennie once missing with a grand drive, and Woods heading over from almost under the bar.

The six changes in the Luton team worked well, and though there was not much combination, the team showed more dash and skill than the "Cobblers." Abbott was safe in goal, and must have rejoiced in the fact that he had a clean sheet again—the first time this year. It was not only a tribute to the goalkeeper, but also to the strong, resolute defence offered by Graham and Richards. Apart from the occasion when Bowen broke through in the second half they covered each other well, tackled with grim determination and kicked strongly. They gave the "Cobblers" little chance of shooting at close quarters.

The middle men also played well. Black and Dennis smothered attempts to utilise the wings, and both kept their forwards on the move with nice passes. Fulton returned to put up a grand game as pivot, and though he had not the advantage of a physique comparable to Maloney's, did equally fine work. The main fault was the frequency with which the ball was put in the air instead of along the ground, and this was equally a defect of the Northampton middle men. Dennis played very well indeed, and after the first few minutes kept Fraser and Smith pretty well subdued.

FORWARDS.

The forwards were not well together long at a time. Now and then the inside forwards showed neat short passing, but the wings were not used to the best advantage, and positioning was not good. All played with fine spirit, however, and undoubtedly were a better attack than the visitors. Yardley was the live wire of the line, and was on the go all the time. His pluck was a big factor in the victory. Woods was a schemer and gave much assistance to his middle line before he was hurt, and Banks came within the same category. Nunn did some clever things and earned his place again, and Rennie made nice passes to his wings, but had no luck with his shooting, and was lacking just that bit of punch in the last yard.

For the "Cobblers," Watson was a sturdy back, but the secret of the team's success this season was revealed in the work of the middle line, and these three could not be blamed for the defeat. They played finely, and there was little to choose between them. The forwards were poor, and Bowen was the only dangerous man of the five. He is a fine player, and with anything like decent support would have given much trouble.

There were 8,000 spectators.

LUTON TOWN	2 goals
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NORTHAMPTON TOWN	Nil
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LUTON. — Abbott; Graham, Richards; Black, Fulton, Dennis; Banks, Yardley, Rennie, Woods, Nunn.

NORTHAMPTON—Hammond; Watson, Brett; Allon, Maloney, Odell; Fraser, Smith, Bowen, Shaw, Aitken.

Referee: Mr. J. H. Collins, Birmingham.