

READING SUCCEED

Luton Unlucky in a Fierce Struggle

(By Crusader)

EIGHT THOUSAND people saw a surprising result at Reading on Saturday, when Luton Town were defeated by the same margin as last season. After enjoying the better of the exchanges for two-thirds of the game, Luton fell away, and Reading, taking advantage of their chances, scored twice in the last ten minutes to make a result that might have been reversed on the actual run of the game.

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KIRKWOOD had the pleasure of scoring in his first League game for the Town, a great header from a centre by Pease following a spell of brilliant play by the Luton forwards and halves. In contrast to the stylish play of the Town, the attacks of Reading were of slap-dash character, but they served to equalise. NEWTON heading through unexpectedly when Fielding, by a long kick, placed the ball in the Town goal area.

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These were the only goals of the first half, and although Harford had to make great saves in order to frustrate Newton, Oxbury and Butler, the Reading goal had far more escapes. Whittaker made very good saves, while Pearson was wrongly given offside on receiving the ball at close quarters from an opponent, and all he had to do was to shoot into the net. Hayhurst and his backs had to fight desperately to keep the Town out, but did so, and the teams crossed over on level terms after a strenuous first half.

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The Town should have taken the lead in the first minute after the resumption, for Whittaker was robbed by Pearson after he had saved close to the upright, and in the scrimmage Pease lifted the ball over when a goal seemed certain. Play was in favour of the Town for some time, though Reading's raids were always dangerous owing to the opportunism of the forwards. Both goalkeepers were in action often, but there was better packing of the home goal than of Luton's, and although the defenders gave away a lot of free kicks, they kept the Town out.

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Reading took the lead twenty minutes after the restart when, following an apparently harmless attack on the left, the ball went to NEWTON, and his shot glanced off Mackey's head into the net. Harford having no chance at all. Encouraged by this, Reading had the better of the game for a time, but were beaten back, and the Town attacked persistently, but could not find a shot that would beat Whittaker. Their goal had narrow escapes, and there was always a chance of a point until the referee made a sad blunder that put Reading safe.

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Following a corner-kick against the Town, the ball was headed out and the Town defenders moved forward, leaving Newton alone in the goalmouth. The ball came back, and NEWTON put through, the referee allowing the goal, much to the surprise of everybody, and none more so than the scorer. Play had been rough for some time, and the closing stages were very hot, and from a free-kick against the Town McGOUGH headed the fourth goal.

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Though hardly comparable with the Town for scientific football, Reading won because of superior fighting quality, and second-half enthusiasm. Whittaker kept goal well, and his backs and halves, though giving away many free kicks, achieved their purpose of keeping the Town from scoring more than once. Hayhurst was a prominent figure in the home defence, and was virtually the only one of the back divisions to keep his game clean. Newton's leadership was notable for opportunism, otherwise the line showed no particular cleverness until the issue was safe, and then, as is usual, they could do all they were allowed to do.

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The Town were deserving of sympathy. They put up a splendid game, and it would be difficult, in spite of the score, to pick out a weak spot in the defence. I cannot recall when a centre-forward scored three goals against the Town with McGinnigle at centre-half, and he played really well in spite of Newton's success. Kean and Fraser were also in form, each combining with his wing in many delightful movements. Kingham and Mackey did very well without any luck, and Harford had no chance with the goals against him.

As clever as ever, Martin was not robust enough for the task of leading the forwards, especially as the home backs were handling out the rough stuff. Kirkwood and Rennie played magnificently, some of the footwork being positively brilliant, and the wingers got chances to shine. Only in the finishing was there a deficiency, and had there been an opportunist of the quality of Newton on the Town side, the result would have been reversed.

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READING: Whittaker; Ridley, Rowe; Johnson, Hayhurst, Wright; Butler, McGough, Newton, Oxbury, Fielding.

LUTON: Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Pease, Kirkwood, Martin, Rennie, Pearson.

Referee: Mr. A. J. Spittle, Gravesend.

READING 4

LUTON TOWN 1

Scorers for Reading: NEWTON (3).

McGOUGH.

For Luton: KIRKWOOD.

THE LEAGUE—DIVISION III. (SOUTH)

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Charlton	12	7	3	2	33	19	16
Norwich	12	7	3	2	32	20	16
Palace	13	6	3	4	25	21	16
Rangers	12	7	4	1	24	16	15
Reading	12	6	4	2	24	15	14
Exeter	13	6	5	2	23	17	14
Bristol R.	12	6	4	2	20	16	14
Coventry	12	5	4	3	32	20	13
LUTON TOWN	13	5	5	3	28	25	13
Aldershot	12	4	3	5	13	12	13
Bournemouth	12	6	5	1	22	23	13
Gillingham	12	5	4	3	21	22	13
Cardiff	12	5	5	2	19	22	12
Swindon	12	5	5	2	16	22	12
Torquay	12	5	5	2	16	27	12
Brighton	13	4	6	3	18	20	11
Southend	12	4	5	3	15	21	11
Orient	12	3	5	4	14	17	10
Newport	12	3	5	4	12	15	10
Northampton	12	3	6	3	16	22	9
Watford	12	2	7	3	18	27	7
Bristol C.	12	0	8	4	13	35	4