

LUTON'S TEN MEN ALMOST WON WITH LATE RALLY

PAYNE HAD PUNCH TO GET GOALS

BY GEORGE FORREST

Luton 3, Blackpool 3

IT'S the Cup that cheers. Ten Luton lads fought as they have never fought to earn a replay, for, after 20 minutes they were a goal down, and, until well into the second half, they looked as though they had shot their bolt.

Then came as rousing a rally as one wants to see. Blackpool's classic touches vanished, and along came the goals that take Luton to the seaside on Wednesday.

And all this was achieved by ten men. In the sixth minute Payne square-passed to Hancock, but the outside-right, with only the keeper to beat, shot weakly. That miss might have changed the run of the game; but four minutes later another misfortune befell Luton—Hancock pulled a muscle, hobbled along on the line for some time and then went off.

From that point until the end of the half Blackpool were easily on top on the "skating rink." They knew the art of holding the ball, and taking it right up to an opponent before slipping round him.

Nelson had a bad time of it then. The skidding ball seemed to be an elusive pimpernel to him, and the small Blackpool inside forwards just vanished when he went to get his shoulders to them. His helplessness made a great difference to the Luton defence in the first half, and it meant that Blackpool got a lead.

Payne Grand Leader

Blackpool made the score 1-3 midway through the second half, but that was the end of their supremacy. For some reason passes became too short, and the Luton half-backs nipped in time and again.

Payne led his three henchmen in great style after that. He took some watching himself, but the way he slipped the ball out to the "near-wingers" was a poem of precision. He scored a goal and made the pass that brought the equaliser; and if Wallace, in the Blackpool goal, had not been in his best form, the Luton centre might have got a winner, so deadly was his shooting.

And it was only at the last minute that he played, his touch of influenza having improved to let him take the field.

For fighting spirit in that second half I award the palm to the ten Luton men, but I have a sneaking feeling that until then Blackpool had the better football skill and had the cooler heads in a crisis. There was no man outstanding, but as a line the half-backs were much, much superior to the Luton trio, who seemed to be off form for a long spell.

Luton's backs were grand tacklers, and, if they did not kick so far or so accurately, they got through their work as well as the Blackpool pair.

My log of the goals reads:—

First: In 21 minutes Dolman punched out a shot from Watmough and in a flash Finan had the ball in the net.

Second: Martin took a free kick four minutes later on the edge of the penalty area and Payne crashed home a grand shot.

Third: Nelson stopped the ball on the line, but took so long in attempting a clearance that Middleton easily sent it home—32 minutes.

Fourth: This followed a neat run by Watmough, the winger finishing with a shot that gave Dolman no chance, after 20 minutes of the second half.

Fifth: In 28 minutes Payne and Roberts led a raid, and the centre netted from close in.

Sixth: Three minutes later Blair kicked out a scoring shot, but Stephenson cottoned on and drove the ball into the net.

Luton.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hancock, Martin, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.

Blackpool.—Wallace; Blair, Witham; Farrow, Cardwell, Hall; Watmough, Middleton, Finan, Jones (T. W.), Hill.