

TOULDAU

SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. MANCHESTER CITY.

A SPLENDID VICTORY.

The Town Club may well rejoice over the brilliant triumph with which the team inaugurated the New Year. It was a formidable undertaking to collar two points from Manchester City, but the men set about their task with the right good will and the confidence that often brings off big successes. The crowd on Saturday must have mustered 4,000 strong, and the densely-thronged ground was a cheerful sight to the Directors. There was no wind, and though the ground was heavy and soon became churned up into mud, the day was extremely favourable. The visitors brought their full strength with two exceptions in the back division, where Smith and Harper were Reserves. In the local team Ekins was standing down owing to injury, and McInnes went outside. A punctual start was made as under :

Luton—Williams ; McCartney and McEwen ; Davies, Stewart, and Docherty ; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, Little, and McInnes.

Manchester—C. Williams ; Harper and Ray ; Moffat, Smith and Holmes ; Meredith, Whitehead, Gillespie, Williams, and Leonard.

The referee was Mr. Rollins, of Walsall, and the linesmen were Messrs. W. J. Wilson and C. Knight.

Losing the toss was no serious matter for Luton, as there was scarcely a breeze stirring. From Donaldson's kick-off, the home forwards broke away at once, and Charlie Williams had to kick out a shot from Gallacher. A smart dash by Little gave the Luton right-winger a lovely opportunity, but he shot rather feebly and the backs managed to avert disaster by conceding a corner. It was evident from the start that the game would be a stubborn fight, and all 22 men put forth every effort. The pitch soon worked up into a terribly muddy state, and the greasy ball could not be induced to travel any pace without the most powerful of kicks.

The Luton men, however, quickly grasped the situation and showed capital judgment in passing over the heavy ground. At the same time, the City forwards were never idle, and Whitehead and Meredith made things lively with some clever bursts down the right wing. But Luton did three-fourths of the attacking in the first half, and after a good attempt from Stewart, Donaldson pounced on a splendid pass from Docherty, outwitted both backs, and as Williams ran out of goal, banged the leather under the cross-bar amid an immense demonstration of enthusiasm. Only 11 minutes had passed, and this success greatly inspired the locals, as well it might.

The first score coming to Luton seemed an eye-opener to the City team, and they commenced to "buck-up" considerably. But Luton responded to every effort of the Manchester men, and the ball came again dangerously near their goal, Docherty almost doing the trick with a well-judged long shot. Whitehead got offside, and a foul against Little for jumping only led up to a grand centre from Gallacher, which Coupar was within an ace of converting. Directly afterwards, "Billy" tried again, and Little banged a terrific shot right into Williams' arms, but the old Woolwich custodian saved finely, though the Luton man was given offside.

Danger was threatened from a run by Leonard, but Stewart came to the rescue just as Whitehead seemed certain to equalise. The City forwards shot twice behind the Luton lines, and the crowd impartially cheered them. After a while, a nice opening came in Little's way, but the ball was as heavy as lead and rolled lazily towards Charlie Williams, who coolly returned. At the other end, Dick Williams had to clear from his namesake among the City forwards, and Luton next besieged their opponents citadel, Gallacher having hard lines in not scoring from a pass by McInnes. A couple of fouls against Docherty and Davies put Luton on the defence for a space, but though Manchester were trying hard, their assaults were baffled at every attempt. Two fine shots by Little and McCartney were followed by a fierce bully close on the City goal lines, and the players had a wholesale baptism of mud, while the crowd cheered excitedly. A corner resulted, and a minute afterwards McInnes put across, and, Docherty centreing grandly, Coupar rushed through No. 2 with a magnificent dash. Half-time arrived while the spectators were shouting themselves hoarse :

LUTON	...	...	...	2 goals
MANCHESTER	...	...	...	0 "

hoarse :

LUTON	...	...	...	2 goals
MANCHESTER	...	...	...	0 „

The score was only a fair indication of the game so far, and marked as their superiority had been in the first 45, we all wondered "Will Luton keep it up?" Yes, they would ; and they did. The game had not been resumed a minute before the home forwards were attacking as vigorously as ever, and Charlie Williams had slipped down in giving a corner. The City got away a bit from a foul against McEwen, and the Luton Williams had his first clearance. Little "Mac" now put in some fine kicks, and the pressure was transferred to the other end, where Donaldson was twice conspicuous in the onslaught, one of his shots missing by inches only. Ray miskicked badly, but the keeper covered the slip, and the Manchester forwards broke clear away, Dick Williams saving splendidly from Leonard.

Luton retaliated vigorously, and forced two corners in quick succession, Gallacher unluckily heading wide. The City Williams was called upon from a grand run by Little, and again from Davies. Matters were taking a serious turn for the visitors, and they once more braced themselves for goal-getting. For a while they hovered in Luton territory, but another run by Little frustrated their designs, and, from a foul, Coupar nearly headed through, and a couple of corners to Luton gave C. Williams a worrying time.

Then an exciting incident occurred. The Manchester forwards made a final spurt, and a hard shot came across from the left wing. The ball floundered through the quagmire in front of goal, and Docherty, in trying to clear, seemed to kick between the Luton posts. Fortunately the mud clogged the ball's progress before it reached the line, and Williams just managed to clear. This was, indeed, a narrow "squeak" for Luton, and must have been a galling disappointment for the visitors. The City could not score, try how they would, and 6 minutes before the finish, a spirited attack by the home forwards ended in Donaldson converting into No. 3 a fine centre by Coupar. Both sets of players had now had enough, and the crowd dispersed rejoicing at the figures :

LUTON	...	...	...	3 goals
MANCHESTER	...	...	...	0 „