

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AND THE LEAGUE.

VICTORY AT GRIMSBY.

SEVERE DEFEAT FOR THE "FISHERMEN."

On Saturday the Lutonians played another game in the Second Division of the League, when their opponents were Grimsby Town. It will be borne in mind that on Boxing Day the "stripes" vanquished the "fishermen" by no fewer than six goals to none. The return encounter was not looked forward to with very great confidence, however, for the Grimsby men have the reputation of playing a splendid game on their own ground. Still, it was quite on the cards that the special training which the Luton men had indulged in last week would have its effect in the play, and to further improve the Lutonian chances it was agreed to send the men down on Friday night. The half-time wire, which showed the score to stand at one all, afforded great satisfaction and paved the way for the final, which brought the news of a very creditable victory for the "stripes."

The sides were constituted thus:

Grimsby: Goal, Whittaker; backs, Lindsay and Frith; half-backs, McLean, Bell and Chatburn; forwards, Goldie and Robinson (right), McCairns (centre), Fletcher and Gray (left).

Luton Town: Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Davies, Stewart and Docherty; forwards, Gallacher and Coupar (right), Donaldson (centre), Little and McInnes (left).

Referee, Mr. A. G. Tomlinson.

Little time was lost in starting, and referee Tomlinson set the men off to the minute says the *Daily Telegraph* of Grimsby). A dashing piece of play by the visiting forwards speedily brought Lindsay and Frith into action, but all danger was cleared, and the next incident of note was a free kick about 30 yards from goal to the Town team, Lindsay sending the ball well into the Luton quarters. It should be said that the Town had lost the toss, and were having to contend against a slight wind. After the preliminary burst on the part of the straw-plaiters the Town appeared to be settling down, M'Lean doing good work, whilst Lindsay laid well on to the home halves. It was pretty evident in the first five minutes that every inch of the ground would be sturdily fought. The crowd, which numbered about 4,000, watched the varying stages of the game with excitement, and there was a mighty cheer whenever the Town got within shooting range. A corner forced by Fletcher made things uncomfortable for the visitors, and a roar of laughter announced that the nether garments of one of the Luton men had burst under the too severe strain which was placed upon them. After a couple of minutes' delay the ball was again bobbing near the centre, and it was astonishing how little progress it made towards either of the defended citadels. At length Robinson got in excellent position for putting in a fine screw shot, but he failed to get at the right angle, and the ball was sent yards wide. After 18 minutes' play Luton suddenly smartened up, and gave their right wing, Gallacher and Coupar, all the possible chances they could. The result of this was some uncomfortable pressure near the Town goal. An exciting scrimmage under the bar followed a corner, and Whittaker was remarkably smart in getting the ball away on more than one occasion. Only two minutes after this, and whilst the crowd were silent to a painful degree, Gallacher tore down the wing like a stag, and after beating Frith in pace succeeded in screwing in from the goal-line. McInnes was keenly alive to the situation, and whilst Whittaker was endeavouring to reach the oblique and curling shot, the visitors' inside left neatly headed the ball quite out of his reach. This was after 20 minutes' play, and there was no possible doubt the score was the result of a fine and well-deserved effort. Nothing of great note occurred for the next five minutes, at the end of which, however, Fletcher made a fine movement in the direction of Williams, and a goal seemed certain. He was tackled, however, by the sturdy custodian, who very luckily got to the ball in the nick of time. The next moment it fell to the toe of Goldie, who had a magnificent chance of scoring, but, when there was only the goalkeeper to beat, he sent the ball some four or five yards wide. Having literally to contend for every yard of the ground, the play when near goal was very disappointing to the Town supporters. The Luton forwards, especially the inside men, were exceedingly tricky, and so far neither of the Town half-backs had appeared to get their full measure, Bell at times displaying a somewhat surprising weakness when contrasted with his excellent form in the recent friendlies. The crowd were very sympathetic, and overlooked some glaring mistakes by the whole of the Town forwards, and they were amply rewarded for their patience, as after a quarter of an hour following the Luton success, M'Cairns, leaning a little to the right, sped away towards Williams. The Luton halves were altogether in the wrong place for catching the wily "Tommy," who, steadying himself, struck the cross-bar with a grand shot. As the ball came out Gray dashed along, and meeting the ball, safely deposited it into the desired haven. This was just 10 minutes before half-time, and, needless to say, the equaliser was received with terrific cheering. Just now Grimsby were certainly playing an improved game, while Luton showed evident signs of falling away. The pace, however, had been a cracker, and there was no wonder in this. Just before half-time the Town were additionally handicapped, for, though the wind had fallen, the sun burst out brilliantly, and it was with difficulty that the spectators looking into the Luton goal could follow the play. It must, therefore, have been increasingly difficult for the players. According to the clock the teams were now playing out the moments wasted in the early stages of the game, but they were exciting to a degree, the Luton men having apparently got their second wind, and giving the Town defence serious trouble. The danger was averted, however, and, after the home forwards had smartly attacked, the referee sounded for the interval, the scores being:

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The opening stage of the second half gave indication of further exciting incidents, for once more the Luton right-wing rattled along at a terrific pace, and Coupar only missed the goal by inches. There was no mistaking the fact that Luton were playing up like tigers for the lead, nor could it be denied that they were having the best of the exchanges. It was some six minutes before the Town got into their swing, but there was a want of cohesion amongst the forwards, with the result that their stay in the Luton territory was only of a few minutes' duration. Rodgers was sadly missed on the outside right, and how it came to be believed that Goldie could play in that position it is impossible to state. Play was then rather uninteresting, and the shooting even of the visitors was a long way different from that in the early stages of the game. An exciting incident was next witnessed in the Town goal-mouth, the Luton forwards appearing to smother Whittaker, though hardly, however, keeping to legitimate means, and though they almost netted the ball the referee promptly awarded the Town a free kick. Robinson and M'Cairns were a long way from understanding each other, and while both were hesitating "Ginger" dashed in, the ball going to Goldie, who, however, was palpably off-side and ought not to have attempted to score. From the free kick Luton got down again, but Bell, coming across in fine style, saved in the nick of time. Play then became rather rough, but Mr. Tomlinson was very firm, and very impartial. There appeared to be no necessity for the teams to adopt these tactics, for it was so much time lost, and they had far better have been playing the game. The Town attacked very seldom, and there was every indication, with the fast setting sun and lowering clouds, of the game being finished in semi-darkness. The players were keeping up an excellent pace, and but for frequent tootling of the referee the game might have been more interesting. It was interesting enough, however, for the small, but enthusiastic band of Lutonians, who, after 25 minutes' play, witnessed a tame shot by Donaldson take effect. Whittaker appeared to be absolutely at sea with it, and though there was nothing whatever in the shot of a deadly character, he dived at an imaginary ball, and missed the real one. The spectators were naturally much discouraged with such palpable weakness on the part of their custodian. This goal brought about a change in the home forwards, Robinson taking the place of Fletcher, who went outside right, Goldie stepping inside. The change, however, was the reverse of success, for a time at any rate, for Coupar, with a lofty shot, quite out of the reach of Whittaker, put on the third goal for Luton. Compared with the first half the concluding stages were a mere scramble. Luton were still pressing. Play opened out, however, and the game ended with nearly every player introducing far too much of the rough element into his work. The final result was

LUTON, 3; GRIMSBY, 1.