



LUTON v. SMALL HEATH.

A SECOND LEAGUE LOSS.

Accompanied by a considerable number of directors and enthusiasts, the Luton men made their journey to Birmingham on Friday for the purpose of meeting Small Heath in the Second League. Luton's reputation in the Midland metropolis is by no means insignificant and consequently we find a Birmingham contemporary confessing that the men have done some smart things this season. A large crowd was anticipated, but a frowning sky hung over the Coventry-road ground previous to the kick-off, and the attendance hardly reached 5,000 in consequence.

Mr. W. Henn refereed, controlling the following teams:—

Small Heath: Clutterbuck; Archer and Pratt; Dunlop, Leake and Robertson; Hare, Oakes, Lewis, Abbott and Wharton.

Luton: Williams; Docherty and McEwen; Birch, Stewart, and Perrins; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, Little, and McInnes.

The spin of the coin favoured the Heathens, who elected to kick uphill with the wind at their backs. Docherty was called upon to assert his powers at back. Then play was transferred to the Luton goal, when Pratt saved several times in clever style. Small Heath had another try, which came to nothing, and McInnes, getting possession, went swiftly down the field. Coupar spoilt a good chance by a bad shot. Small Heath went away, but Wharton was given offside, and so their career was stopped. A nice pass by Dunlop to Abbott gave that player an opportunity. His final shot, however, went yards over the bar.

Running into their opponents' territory, Luton put in some clever passing, but could not get past Archer and Pratt. Small Heath broke away, and Wharton sent in a fine centre, which Williams rushed out to save. A minute later, after a scuffle in the goal mouth, Oakes registered the first point for Small Heath. Encouraged by this success, the home forwards made one or two determined attacks. They failed to run in, notwithstanding, and Clutterbuck was compelled to save at the other end, owing to a sudden dash of the Luton forwards. He cleared in fine style. Soon after Dunlop conceded a corner, as a result of which Stewart brought his side level with a shot which Clutterbuck had no chance of saving. Abbott next shaved the bar by a clever kick.

Coupar and Donaldson showed some beautiful work in the centre, but the Small Heath backs averted what looked like danger. Retaliating, the Small Heath forwards went straight for Williams, and by means of a corner scored their second point, Abbott shooting into the net after one or two of the other forwards had had dangerous tries. Hare and Oakes made good use of another opening on the right, but, to the disgust of the spectators, the whistle blew for offside. Again Hare made himself conspicuous, dribbling finely, and only just missing the mark with his final shot. A grand shot from Wharton brought out Williams, who quickly had to save again from Abbott. Enthusiasm now rose high as the Small Heath forwards swarmed round their opponents' goal, and playing with improved combination and dash made matters very warm for the Luton defence.

Another magnificent centre brought commendation to Wharton. Williams fisted out, and Hare returned the ball bang against the upright. Then Abbott had two tries, the first hitting a players' leg, and the second going over the bar and so relieving the tension for a time. The visitors raced down the field, and through a misunderstanding between Archer and Pratt succeeded in equalising, Donaldson doing the trick. Just before the whistle blew Small Heath took the lead once more, Abbott scoring with a penalty kick. Half-time came with the score:

SMALL HEATH	3 goals
LUTON	2 ..

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A neat bit of play by Lewis on the re-start gave Abbott an opening, but his shot was very poor, going yards outside. Leake passing well to his forwards, they tried again, and only succeeded in sending the ball a second time in the wrong direction. Still, with the occasional help of Archer and Pratt, they kept the game in the Luton half of the ground. At length the visitors caused Small Heath to become anxious, but Pratt stopped them, and kicked away a second time when they returned to the attack. McEwen spoilt a dash by the Small Heath right. A free kick to the home team, well taken by Pratt, was headed out by Docherty, and though a good try to score was made by Small Heath, it met with no success. Another, which Leake owed to Lewis, was put to no account, the captain kicking miserably to the side of the post.



A corner led to the Luton goal having a narrow escape, and a long shot from Dunlop was fisted out by Williams. Luton broke away, but Clutterbuck experienced little difficulty with Donaldson's shot, and then McLanes "skied" the ball over the heads of the spectators. Wharton, getting possession, centred in beautiful style, and McEwen, in trying to save, sent the ball flying past his own goalkeeper, bringing the Small Heath total up to four. Archer stopped Gallacher very cleverly. Then Small Heath made things warm for the visitors, keeping up a continual pressure for the next few minutes. They could not get through, however, but the Luton men were just as unsuccessful at the other end when they ran up, a big kick by Pratt bringing their career to a full-stop.



Archer fouled the ball, and Luton strove determinedly to take advantage of the free kick, but Pratt was still in the way. Abbott and Wharton ran away down the left, passing in brilliant style. They kicked the ball just too far, unfortunately, so that Williams was able to throw away. Archer, with a free kick, landed the ball into the mouth of the Luton goal, when Wharton was cheered for a beautiful kick. But the attempt was futile. Robertson shot in grandly, and Williams smartly turned the ball round the post. Small Heath could not add to their score, and time was called with the game:

SMALL HEATH	4
LUTON	2