

THE LEAGUE.—SECOND DIVISION.

LUTON TOWN v. BURNLEY.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town 2 goals.

Burnley nil.

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The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Williams, goal; Davies and McEwen, backs; Perrins, Stewart and Docherty, half-backs; Gallacher, Little, Donaldson, McInnes and Birch, forwards.

Burnley: Hillman, goal; Reynolds and McLintock, backs; Beveridge, Taylor and Place, half-backs; Morrison, Ferguson, Ross, Bowes, and Place, jun., forwards.

Referee, Mr. Adams (Birmingham); linesmen, Messrs. Avery and Partridge (London).

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It was very unfortunate that the weather should have been wet for the most important League match of the season, and what made it more aggravating was the fact that all the week had been fine, and the rain did not come on until about an hour before the time fixed for the kick-off. The gate, considering this very serious drawback, was a fairly good one, the spectators numbering about 3,500, and the takings being just upon £80. I am afraid many cyclists had an unpleasant journey home.

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Burnley's visit had been anticipated with a good deal of interest, for Luton were not at all anxious that Grimsby should be the only Club to have the honour of lowering the colours of the League leaders. But when it transpired that Goupar and McCartney would be unable to play, many were the fears expressed that the hoped-for victory would prove extremely difficult of attainment, even if it were attained at all.

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A forward line with only three of the recognised front string in the rank certainly did not look promising against such formidable opponents as Burnley, and naturally it was felt that the result depended upon the way in which Little shaped at inside-right. Happily, he more than realised the most sanguine hopes, and the manner in which he combined with Gallacher had not a little to do with the success achieved.

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Great Boon to Cyclists and Golfers. The new and original patent Continuation Hose. New Sweaters, 1898 design, now on show at S. Bassett's, the up-to-date Tailor and Outfitter, 28, Wellington-street.—[ADVT.]

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The Luton men had apparently made up their minds to win, for when Donaldson set the ball rolling, they immediately followed it up, and their determination and smartness at once gave the visitors to understand that they had got to go for all they were worth if they wished to win. Little and Gallacher made the running at the start, but they were repelled, and the Burnley quintet getting away in fine style, Morrison managed to obtain a rather lucky corner, which was not turned to account.

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A foul by Docherty elicited cries of "Play the game, Luton," for this was only one of several which the homesters indulged in during the first few minutes, and the spectators have learned, if the players have not, that fouls form one of the most effective means of giving victory to the other side. Stewart headed away from a free kick, and Little and Gallacher again making the pace, the latter put the ball across the mouth of goal, but Donaldson unluckily missed it.

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A brilliant run by McInnes next led to a prolonged attack on the Burnley goal, but though the ball hovered in Hillman's vicinity for some time, the forwards were too much hampered together to get in a clean kick, and it at last fell to Docherty to make the attempt, a good shot from him going just by the upright. Little was responsible for a beauty a moment later, and Hillman saved at the expense of a corner, which was fruitless.

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McInnes and Stewart both essayed shots, and both missed the upright by inches, and then Morrison went away on the right, only to be pulled up by McEwen. The two sets of forwards next showed smart work in turn, and Burnley came perilously near doing the trick. Williams ran out to clear from Ferguson, and while he was out the ball came across to Place, jun., who, with the goal at his mercy, headed wide of the mark.

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Luton, thankful for the let-off, pressed severely, and were only prevented from scoring by the very energetic work of Hillman. At last, however, McEwen was fouled by Morrison, and Mac taking the free kick, Little broke through the defence, and passing to Donaldson, that player had little difficulty, at close quarters, in beating the burly Burnley custodian.

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Immense enthusiasm was manifested at this goal, which was the outcome of twenty minutes' play. After the return to the half-way line, the Luton right wing again went away, but Gallacher was badly fouled as he was making for goal. Davies placed beautifully, and Hillman tipped over the bar. Gallacher undertook the corner, but Hillman treated this as he did most of the others—dashed out and punched the ball away.

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Donaldson, after shooting by the post from an offside position, was again doing a sprint when Reynolds charged him and came off so badly by the contact that he had to be assisted off the field. Burnley determined to give nothing away on this account, and played only one back until Reynolds returned, which he soon did. A good shot by Birch compelled Hillman to give another corner, but no tangible advantage accrued to Luton.

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The Luton forwards were showing some very pretty combination at this time, but repeated failures in front of goal at length took the edge off the play, and the consequence was that Burnley brightened up. Again and again they threatened danger, and Williams seemed to be very ill at ease, but eventually Luton reasserted themselves, and when McInnes was tripped within

the twelve-yards' line by Reynolds, a penalty was asked for but not given. Docherty placed the free kick, and Little lifted over the heads of the players and under the bar, but Hillman was equal to the emergency, and saved by giving a corner.

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Just before the interval, Burnley attacked, and Ferguson put in a lovely shot which Williams saved but did not clear. He and Davis both went for the ball, and both came to the ground, giving Place, jun., the chance of a lifetime. Fortunately for Luton, the junior could not find the right place, and the spectators breathed again, and they were still breathing at half-time.

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When play was resumed, Luton for a time had the best of the exchanges, but the visitors knew their Donaldson, and weighed upon him very heavily, whilst Gallacher nullified two or three splendid runs by putting his centres behind. Burnley retaliated, and Williams kicked out rather tamely a shot from Ross. Luton went away on the right, and from Gallacher's centre, Donaldson nearly scored, but had to be satisfied with a corner. Shortly afterwards, Little passing to Donaldson, the latter transferred to Gallacher, who made a grand run, and completely beat Hillman with a splendid cross-shot.

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Tremendous cheering greeted this performance, for not only was the goal in itself worth having, but it was beautifully got. Foul throws by Docherty and Perrins enabled Burnley to get down, and Williams again adopted the dangerous expedient of kicking out a long low shot—an expedient that was especially dangerous in view of the slippery state of the ball. Burnley made several vigorous assaults, but the Luton defence was very sound, and the ball was soon taken to the other end, where, when it was sent behind the goal on several occasions, it was kicked about to such an extent by the small boys that the referee stopped the play to enquire whether there were not any officials about.

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Birch, who had been treated very badly by Reynolds, had some difficulty in restraining his temper in the course of further operations, which—the operations I mean, not the temper—rather favoured Luton. Once in particular Donaldson made a grand run and seemed certain to score, until he was badly tripped by Reynolds, I believe, though Taylor and Reynolds were perhaps equally concerned. The free kick profited nothing, Hillman saving from a dangerous header by Little.

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The game continued to be of a ding-dong character right up to the finish, and Burnley came wonderfully near scoring on the stroke of time, only being prevented by a marvellous save by Williams, quite the best thing in its line during the afternoon. A great cheer went up at this, and it was renewed directly afterwards when the whistle went, leaving Luton the winners of a hard-fought battle by two goals to none.

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A pluckier and better fight than Luton made under the disadvantageous circumstances referred to could not have been hoped for, much less expected. Every man seemed bent on doing his very best, and it was nothing but their dash and determination, together with a reasonable amount of science, that carried them through. It would be difficult to say which played the best game among the forwards, though if I were to award the palm to anyone it would be to Gallacher. But he, Little, and McInnes all played grandly, and if Donaldson did not shine so much, it was because his every movement was followed, not by one, but two or three of the opposition. Birch rendered very useful service, and if not brilliant, he was generally pretty reliable.

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Docherty was wonderfully effective at half-back, and was the best of the trio, Stewart's exhibition being marred by a little too much eagerness, which sometimes hindered him from disposing of the ball to the best advantage. Perrins did well, and the two backs rendered a splendid account of themselves, McEwen displaying remarkable activity and Davies being very safe. Williams was certainly not at his best, except in the last save, which was as good a one as he has ever made.

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