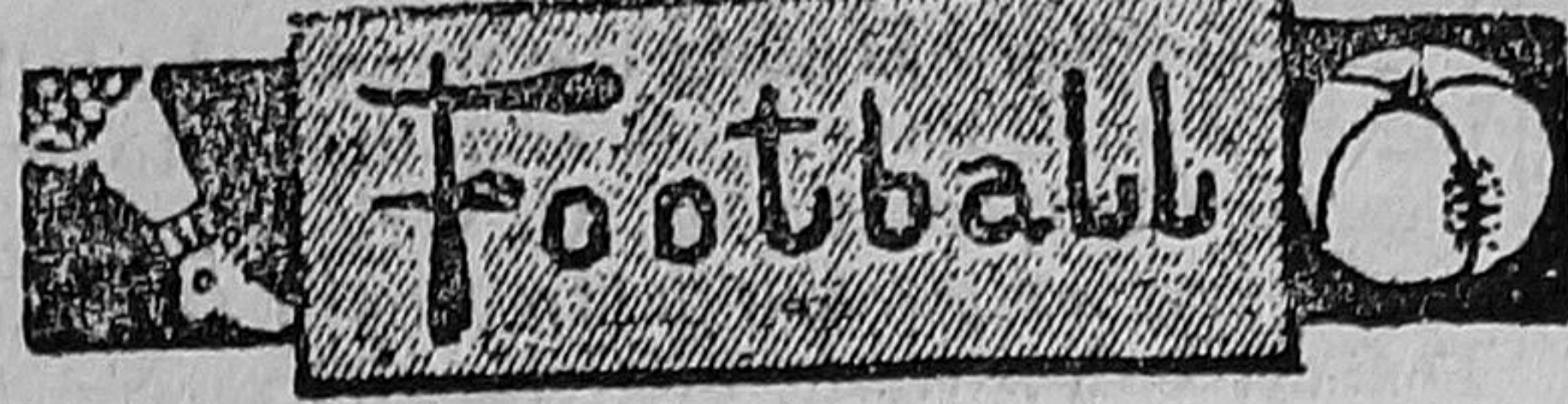




SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SMALL HEATH.

A DISAPPOINTING DEFEAT.

Having remained unbeaten in the Second League on their own ground since September, the Luton club had fair expectations of meting out to Small Heath on Saturday the same full measure as to Burnley, Newcastle, &c. But a bitter disappointment was in store, as the locals quite failed to rise to the occasion and were beaten by a superior team. The Birmingham eleven came without Clutterbuck, their regular goal-keeper, who was absent owing to his mother's death, and also a couple of Reserve forwards. The day was fine and the ground in excellent condition, about 2,000 being present. Luton turned out as usual.

The teams were:—

Luton: Williams; McCartney and McEwen; Davies, Stewart, and Docherty; Gallacher, Coupar, Donaldson, McInnes, and Birch.

Small Heath: Webb; Archer and Pratt; Dunlop, Leake, and Robertson; Inglis, Good, Higgins, Abbott and Oakes.

The referee was Mr. Kingscott, of Derby.

The Heathens kicked off against the wind and Docherty shot wide for Luton, Robertson afterwards conceding a corner. Birch then put across from a palpably offside position and Gallacher nearly rushed the ball through but Webb saved. The Blues had to do some vigorous work in defence but their forwards were extremely smart on the ball. Only 5 minutes had passed when the Birmingham men broke clean away and the ball coming out from a bunch of players Robertson took the chance and scored with a hard drive into the far corner of the net. It was a fine goal, and well deserved the applause given.

This was rather a surprise for Luton and they "bucked up" for a while. Small Heath had a narrow escape from Gallacher, who struck the side of the net and a smart dash by Donaldson gave Birch an opening close in. This was missed, but soon afterwards, two corners in succession fell to Luton, Stewart having hard luck. A splendid shot was put in by McInnes, and Webb ran right out to the corner to save. Coupar gave a clever pass but Gallacher made a most unlucky miss, the crowd giving vent to a mighty "Oh!" of disappointment.

Play became lively and the referee embraced Mother Earth in common with other players. Three more corners and a couple of fouls availed Luton nothing, as Fortune seemed to desert them in front of goal. The visitors had less of the play than the home team, it is true, but they were always far more dangerous when they invaded Luton territory. A rush by Small Heath gave Inglis a clear goal but he shot over, though his comrades were offside.

Luton retaliated and Docherty put in a lovely shot, which Webb steered over the bar. From the corner, the Small Heath custodian saved well and hard shots were put in by Birch and Docherty, Coupar eventually scoring with a fine "header." The scores were now equal after just 30 minutes' play, and the crowd were delighted.

Williams saved twice and Webb cleared another beauty from Docherty. A good opening fell to Birch, close by the post, but he missed badly and lost another chance immediately afterwards. Both teams were working hard and the football was highly interesting up to half-time.

LUTON 1

SMALL HEATH 1

Only 4 minutes after the re-start, Good ran clean away and passed out to Inglis, who completely beat McEwen and scored No. 2 in rather soft fashion. Luton hovered round the visitors' goal but did not utilise opportunities. Eventually, after a foul on Donaldson, they forced a corner but Docherty placed behind. Another foul on the home centre by Archer a few yards from goal met with a similar fate, Davies kicking the wrong side. The third foul in succession on Donaldson led to a splendid shot by Stewart, and Webb threw himself at the ball as it grazed the post.

Gallacher sent in a fine centre and McInnes had the hardest luck in heading just wide. Disheartened by their repeated failures, Luton seemed to slacken for some time. A run by Birch forced a corner but Docherty placed without success. The referee had to caution Good for fouling Davies and a foul by Gallacher spoilt a promising attack by Luton. From a throw-up, Coupar passed out nicely to Birch, who centred well for once, but Gallacher missed in hopeless fashion. In the last minute, Luton made a despairing rush but there was no sting in their assault. The Small Heath defence remained invincible up to the finish of a disappointing game.

SMALL HEATH 2

LUTON 1