

THE LEAGUE.—SECOND DIVISION.

WOOLWICH ARSENAL v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Plumstead on Saturday. Result:—

Woolwich Arsenal		3 goals.
Luton Town		nil.

The teams were as follow:—

LUTON TOWN.

Right.	Williams (goal).	Left.
McCartney.		McEwen.
Perrins.	Stewart (capt.)	Docherty.
Gallacher.	Coupar.	Little.
		McInnes.
		Ekins.



Hayward.	McAvey.	Stuart.	Crawford.	Brock.
Anderson.		Farrell.		Davis.
	Caldwell.		McAuley.	

Left.	Ord (goal).	Right.
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WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

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Referee, Mr. J. Stark; linesmen, Messrs. Rudkin (Loughborough), and Peters (Kettering).

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"Defeated, but not disgraced" must be the verdict in regard to Saturday's match, for though the margin of the Arsenal's superiority, counted in goals, was rather larger than at Luton, there was no comparison in the form shown by the losing side on the two occasions.

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In the first match, the Luton players turned out a dull, dispirited, and flabby lot, without the ghost of a chance from the very commencement, but in the second they were game from beginning to end, and had not lost until the whistle put an end to hostilities. This striking contrast shows what training will do—when the efforts of the trainer are backed up by the players themselves.

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It was in all respects "a grate fite" on Saturday, and it was just one of those encounters in which a little luck suffices to turn the fortunes of the game. The luck favoured the Arsenal, who had more than a little, and it was their luck, and not their superiority, which was shown by the somewhat large margin of goals which fell to their share.

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The teams were so evenly matched that a draw, or a goal either way, might very well have been the result, and if there were anything in it at all, I think it was Luton who deserved the spoils, for they maintained the evenness of the game in the face of the greatest discouragements, as I shall presently show.

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The day was practically all that could be desired from a football point of view, and the excursion arranged by the Luton directors with the Great Northern Railway was fairly well patronised, about 300 undertaking the journey. There were the inevitable delays on the South-Eastern line, the officials there thoughtfully utilising the train for carrying their passengers, but Plumstead was reached about a quarter of an hour before the kick-off took place.

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When the Luton contingent arrived on the ground, there was already an immense crowd assembled, numbering, I should say, ten or twelve thousand persons. The referee was not quite so punctual, it being fully ten minutes after the advertised time when he put in an appearance. No time was then lost in getting the men into position, and the battle began, with Luton, who had lost the toss, facing a rather troublesome breeze.

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Luton were the first to attack, Little and McInnes working their way through the opposing defence almost immediately, but Coupar nullified the effort by sending wide. The Arsenal retaliated, and after Perrins had cleared from Stuart, McCartney headed away from Caldwell.

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Then a strange thing happened. The Arsenal got down again, and Brock putting the ball in front of goal, Williams ran out to the assistance of his backs, who had got a bit mixed up with the Arsenal forwards, and to the joy of the Woolwich people, and the consternation of the visitors, the ball rolled gently into goal, Stuart being the man to put on the finishing touch. Only three minutes had elapsed from the kick-off, and a more discouraging piece of business for Luton could scarcely be imagined.

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Nothing daunted, however, the visitors replied with vigour, and from a throw-in, McInnes hooked the ball into the mouth of the Arsenal goal, giving Ekins a splendid chance, which was thrown away with a wild shot. Luton came again, and Ord had to save from a good one by Little.

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A pretty run by the Arsenal forwards was

A pretty run by the Arsenal forwards was responded to by Luton, and after Ord had successfully negotiated a shot from Coupar, Little put in a beauty, to which a corner was given. Perrins placed finely, and the ball glanced off Coupar's head with lightning rapidity into goal, where Ord brought off a grand save.

The game was very fast, both sides playing for all they were worth, but for a time Luton had the better of the play, several fouls against their opponents helping them considerably. Then the Arsenal again assumed the aggressive, and a bad kick by McCartney let in M'Avoy, who grazed the side of the upright.

A moment afterwards, McCartney cleared from a particularly dangerous attack, and was followed in the same direction by Stewart, who, however, had a foul given against him just outside the twelve yards' line, but nothing came of the free kick. After a bit, Luton got away, and Ekins receiving from McInnes, put in a lovely shot from the touch-line, but Ord cleared just in time to circumvent other of the Luton forwards.

The visitors returned to the attack, and following upon some good work by McInnes and Little, Gallacher got in a middle, which Caldwell completely missed, leaving McInnes with the goal at his mercy, but instead of shooting at once, he just touched the ball and lost it. A fine piece of play by Crawford, who ran round McEwen at the other end, resulted in a corner, McCartney heading over, but no advantage accrued.

Luton again going well, Gallacher got in another good centre, and Caldwell once more missed, giving McInnes the chance of a life-time, but Tommy, who had been playing brilliantly with Little in the field, achieved the apparently impossible feat of shooting high over the top of the goal, whilst Little himself a minute afterwards failed to turn to account a first-rate opening.

It was not to be expected that the Arsenal would keep on presenting Luton with such opportunities, and they soon turned the tables, M'Avoy and Stuart doing some good work, the former eventually getting the ball in at the top corner of the goal just after the whistle had sounded for off-side. Luton made one or two spirited assaults in reply, but on the whole the play from now to the interval favoured the home team. The failure of Williams to clear a shot from M'Avoy gave Brock a rare opportunity, but he got the wrong elevation, and Haywood finished up the first half with a shot which landed on the net.

For the first fifteen or twenty minutes of the second half Luton were all over their opponents, and the Arsenal goal experienced several narrow escapes. At the very outset, Little almost succeeded in working his way through, but ultimately he had to pass to Coupar, who shot tamely. A little later, Docherty placing well from a free kick, Little hit the cross-bar, whilst soon afterwards, a combined rush from the forwards would have carried the ball through from a good kick by McEwen, but that combined rush was not forthcoming.

But the best chance of the day came when, after a beautiful shot by Little, Luton were again going for goal, and Ekins had his legs kicked from under him by Anderson within the twelve yards line. The referee, after consultation with both linesmen, awarded Luton a penalty kick, but apparently he was not sufficiently acquainted with the rules of the game to see that it was properly carried out.

Ord advanced to the six yards line, and of course he ought to have remained there until the kick was taken, the rule being explicit on the point, but directly McCartney commenced to move, Ord moved also, with the result that both men reached the ball about the same time. Twice McCartney, by not kicking, showed up Ord's manoeuvres, but Mr. Starke, instead of insisting upon Ord keeping his proper place, gave McCartney no option but to take the kick at the next attempt.

Really official ignorance of the rules of the game is colossal. The consequence of the referee's inability to see that the conditions were properly observed was that Ord was not two yards off when McCartney kicked, and the shot was simply smothered. Why, the simple fact is that if these tactics were always allowed, a penalty kick would be even less valuable than an ordinary free kick, as it would be practically impossible to score from it.

Immediately after this, the play became very reckless, Luton showing their exasperation in the fierceness of their attack. The other side were so severely put to it for the time that they almost lost their heads, and Little had just put

in a splendid shot, when he was very badly charged by Caldwell, and play had to be stopped for a minute or two until he came round. The play had hardly been resumed when Caldwell took a deliberate flying kick at Little, but happily just missed. For this, he certainly ought to have received marching orders.

At last, the Arsenal were able to get away, McCartney, who had been quite out of the running since the penalty kick, letting in Haywood. The latter centred, and Williams having cleared, the ball was returned, and Brock headed through.

Both sides after this attacked in turn, and McInnes getting clear put in a shot which Ord just succeeded in saving, possibly as much by luck as by judgment. Some good play on the Luton right followed, and Gallacher centred, but McInnes got offside. The Arsenal responded, and from a free kick, M'Auley hit the bar. The ball then fell in front of goal, and though it was cleared for a moment, Caldwell returned, and after a bit of a scrimmage, Davies scored a third point.

Still, Luton were not done with, and McInnes, Docherty, and Coupar all got in lovely shots, but Ord seemed to bear a charmed life, and the game ended in a win for the Arsenal by three goals to nil, a state of affairs which was in no way justified by the play.

I feel perfectly certain that if Luton had equalised from the penalty kick, as they ought to have done, and as they doubtless would have done but for the strange perversity of the referee, they would have romped home, for in the second half, up to that point, they had had all the best of the play.

As it was, we may say that it was Ord who won the game for the Arsenal, his exhibition of goal-keeping being a brilliant one in all respects. He had plenty to do—much more, I think, than Williams—and on the form shown I should think he might be written down as the best man on the field.

The next best was Little, who played a grand game at centre forward. In the first half he derived a great deal of assistance from McInnes, the two of them working together splendidly. Tommy fell off a lot a bit after his want of success in front of goal, but Little performed in great style up to the finish. He had to put up with plenty of knocking about, but he never spared himself the least, and if he will only maintain the same form, we shall do some great things yet. Perhaps he might with advantage have sent out more to his wings.

Coupar played well, but both he and Gallacher showed rather too much inclination for dribbling, which does not come off against smart opponents. Ekins did not have enough to do to keep him warm.

Stewart worked very hard at centre half, and completely overshadowed his namesake, and Perrins also did capital service. Docherty was not quite at his best, and McCartney, who, I understand, had not been well during the week, was far from it. McEwen played a sound game, and perhaps there was nothing wrong with Williams, but he did not shine as much as usual.

Brock and Hayward were the shining lights of the Arsenal front string, though both M'Avoy and Crawford performed well. The halves played up strongly, and M'Auley again proved himself a good and reliable back.

I had almost forgotten to say that the Luton Red Cross Band was on the ground, and the performers were loudly applauded for a good selection of music.

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The "Daily Mail" representative writes:—"If ever there was a League fixture which required a strong referee that match was played on Saturday at Plumstead. I have seen Mr. J. Stark referee very well, but on Saturday he made a number of errors, mostly in connection with the rule relating to off-side play. He made one bad blunder, and it is perhaps not too much to say that it cost Luton the match. Early in the second half, Luton were pressing severely, and Anderson badly fouled one of the Luton forwards, so deliberately, in fact, that he should have been ordered off the field. As it was, the referee awarded a penalty kick. McCartney was appointed to take it, but was so interfered with by Ord and other Arsenal players that an ordinary free kick would have been much more dangerous.

"The rule relating to penalty kicks distinctly states that the goalkeeper 'shall not advance more than six yards from the goal line, and shall be at least six yards from the ball.' This rule was utterly ignored by Ord, who, as McCartney ran towards the ball, went out to meet it. This happened three or four times. When at last McCartney did take the kick, Ord could not have been more than two feet away, and, as a matter of fact, he almost knocked the ball away from McCartney's feet. From this point, Luton seemed to lose heart, and had two more goals recorded against them."

I understand the Luton authorities are reporting the penalty kick business to the League, and certainly they are not only wise in doing so, but are absolutely bound to do it in the interests of the game.

The "Daily Chronicle," in commenting upon that penalty kick business, says:—"Some local writers endeavour to excuse the action of Ord, the player in question—or rather of the referee, Mr. Stark—on the ground that the blowing of the referee's whistle for the kick is justification for the defending goalkeeper's advance. One might just as stupidly argue that a game starts with the referee's whistle. It does not. No opponent to the kicker-off may advance within ten yards of the ball until it is kicked off. The penalty-kick law is also clear. 'The opponents' goalkeeper . . . shall not advance more than six yards from the goal-line. . . . The ball shall be in play when the kick is taken.'"

The "Daily Mail," which had some excellent notes on the Tottenham match—so good, indeed, that I wish I had the space to give the whole of them—said: "Ekins, on the left wing, was undoubtedly the hero of the match. His sprints down the left wing and subsequent centres, right into the mouth of goal, were brilliantly executed efforts. He had a good partner in Molnes, who quickly discovered that it was Ekins' day out, and fed him persistently."

In the Second Division matches, Manchester City beat Grimsby Town by three goals to nil, Blackpool won their first match by defeating Burton Swifts (2-1), Newcastle United beat Newton Heath by two goals to nil, Small Heath just managed to lord it over Gainsborough Trinity by four goals to three, and Lincoln City made a draw with Darwen at two goals all. The only visiting teams to secure victories were Walsall, who beat Loughborough by three to nil, and Burnley, who vanquished Leicester Fosse by a goal to nil. The League table now reads as follows:—

	Played.	Won.	Lost.	Drn.	Goals For.	Goals Agst.	Pts.
Manchester City	7	7	0	0	22	3	14
Burnley	7	6	0	1	21	4	13
Small Heath	6	5	0	1	14	7	11
Newcastle United	6	5	1	0	15	7	10
Woolwich Arsenal	8	4	3	1	17	16	9
Newton Heath	6	4	2	0	13	4	8
Grimsby Town	7	3	3	1	14	13	7
Darwen	7	2	3	2	10	20	6
Luton Town	5	2	2	1	7	7	5
Walsall	7	2	5	0	15	14	4
Gainsboro' Trinity	7	2	5	0	11	20	4
Blackpool	6	1	4	1	3	14	3
Burton Swifts	6	1	5	0	7	16	2
Leicester Fosse	5	0	3	2	2	6	2
Loughborough	6	1	5	0	3	14	2
Lincoln City	6	0	4	2	8	19	2

Millwall again suffered defeat on Saturday, being beaten on their own ground by three goals to two. The victors were Southampton, and the match was a Southern League one. In this League, Millwall have played seven matches, and gained only four points.