

FOOTBALL.

LUTON TOWN v. BURNLEY.

A HEAVY DEFEAT.

Luton Town played their eighth game in the Second Division of the League on Saturday, and it surprised few in this locality to learn that they had again tasted the bitterness of defeat. It would have been extraordinary, indeed, had they succeeded in winning, for they had been measured against the leaders of the division, the encounter taking place on foreign soil. Whereas the "stripes" had been thrice defeated, it was able to be said that Burnley had dropped only three points in 11 engagements, one defeat having come from Grimsby. There did not appear much likelihood, therefore, that on this occasion the Lutonians would find it possible to procure the wished-for brace of League points; but the men nevertheless set out confident of their ability to at least make a good show. The team travelled by the 3 o'clock Midland train on Friday as far as Skipton, where they stayed the night, completing the journey on Saturday morning. The weather was brilliantly fine and there was a good gate, the attendance being variously estimated at from 4,000 to 7,000. Both sides were strongly represented, though a shifting up of the Luton forwards had led many to doubt whether the change was for the better.

The sides ranged up thus:—

Burnley: Goal, Haddow; backs, Reynolds and McClintock; half-backs, O'Rourke, Taylor and Livingstone; forwards, Morrison and Ross (right), Toman (centre), Bowes and Place (left).

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

Referee: Mr. Ramsbottom.

The homesters lost the toss and faced the slope, Toman commencing operations. It was not long ere the Burnley men were observed to be attacking strongly, Bowes, Toman and Ross having shies at goal, all failing owing to the excellent defence offered by Williams. The Lutonians made their way to the home end once or twice, but they were not very dangerous. The "stripes'" defence was too strong for the ex-First Leaguers for a quarter of an hour, but when the Lutonians had been driven back from the neighbourhood of Haddow came the downfall. Place neglected a chance of scoring; but Bowes made amends by notching the first goal just later with a brilliant effort. Ross sent through once more; but Mr. Ramsbottom decided that the inside right was off-side. The Lutonians played up much better afterwards; but they were lamentably weak in front of goal. Five minutes after the first goal had been secured Bowes obtained a second, this time from a centre by Morrison. Subsequently the visitors rarely got away and the home keeper had very little to do. The leaders were content with the advantage they had secured and took matters somewhat easily. The interval score was:

BURNLEY, 2; LUTON, 0.

After the resumption Place made himself conspicuous and Williams effected a capital clearance from the home right wing. The visitors' citadel subsequently underwent a long-continued siege, and Williams was twice called upon. The Lutonians next broke away; but they were unable to do anything useful. On the other hand the Burnley forwards were frequently dangerous, some excellent efforts being credited to them. The "stripes" later on called upon Haddow two or three times, though always without the desired result accruing. The Burnley lot attacked hotly, the outcome being that when play had been in progress some 25 minutes a third goal came, one of the Luton backs heading into the net. Corners came to the locals, who had all the best of matters in the later stages of the game, and before the close Ross put on a fourth. When the end came the homesters had won with the following scores:—

BURNLEY, 4; LUTON, 0.

The *Athletic News* says:—"Owing to the recent rain the going was rather heavy, and this to some extent, no doubt, affected the pace. The home side had the best of the play from the very outset, but they were opposed by a strong defence. When operations had been in progress 16 minutes Bowes opened the scoring, and a few minutes later the same player had the satisfaction of registering the second point. Directly after this Haddow scooped the ball out near the post, this being the only shot which gave him any trouble during the whole game. It will thus be seen that the Luton forwards were not a particularly dangerous lot. Though nothing further was done in the scoring line previous to the interval, Luton may consider themselves rather lucky. Play was more even for a time on resuming, Haddow twice assisting in clearing the goal, but the bulk of the pressing was done by the home side, though there was not nearly so much spirit about the attacks as previously. Still Williams had far more shots to clear than fell to Haddow, who in the whole game had not to handle more than five times. At last Burnley, who wrested numerous corners, registered their third point, the ball going into the net off one of the defenders, and this was followed in a few minutes by another, the principal credit for which was due to Ross, though Toman put on the finishing touch. After this Burnley played a much better game, their passing being very good, and their shooting was such as to keep Williams occupied; but they did not score again, and Burnley ran out winners by four to none. The home side were quite entitled to the verdict, for they were quite four goals better than their opponents. The feature of the match was Williams's goalkeeping. He was not in the least to blame for the score; in fact, the margin might have been larger without any reflection on his character as a guardian of the sticks. At times Luton showed nice work, but they were overpowered. Next to Williams I hold M'Ewen, Stewart, and the outside left in most esteem. As indicated Haddow's position was nearly a sinecure. The backs were equal to every emergency, the half-backs were ever on the alert, and the forwards, though inclined to show off at times, were a capital lot. They all played well, but Ross was more conspicuous than for some time past."

The *Morning Leader* winds up a special report with the following criticisms:—"Of course some people will consider that Luton did badly, but I don't take this view, and I think I can prove that they did not by an examination of Burnley's record at Turf Moor this season. They had held an impregnable position at home; they had beaten Blackpool by 5 goals to 1, Woolwich by 5 to 0, Newcastle by 3 to 0, Walsall by 4 to 1, Burton by 2 to 0, and Manchester City by 3 to 1. Now, in the face of these statistics can it be for one moment contended that Luton were disgraced? Some of the Luton supporters may feel inclined to say that if Burton could run Burnley to a couple of goals Luton, who are a stronger team than the Swifts, ought to have done equally as well, if not better; but I can inform those people that Burnley on the occasion when they met Burton played the very worst game that they had done this season. All through Luton played a strong, hard game, and their defence, though it was penetrated four times, was of the most stubborn description. There was not a bad player among either the halves or backs. Davies had many a bout with the speedy Morrison, and quite held his own, while Docherty and McCartney were usually a match for that clever wing couple, Bowes and Place, McCartney's physique often proving a great service to him. M'Ewen only made one mistake, and that cost his side a goal. The forwards displayed great energy, but a lot of their work was thrown away through want of method and poor shooting. Indeed, while the vanguard showed a com-

mendable desire to shine, it was at the same time the weakest part of the team. Now and again there were flashes of really brilliant play, which out-manceuvred the opposing defenders, but these fine efforts resulted in an ignominious failure in front of goal. Birch and Ekins were more troublesome than Gallacher and M'Innes, but, generally speaking, there was not much to choose between the quintette. Williams displayed cleverness and resource in all he did. Luton struck me as being a good, well-balanced team, but they are addicted to faulty shooting."

The *Burnley Express* says: "The visitors were, for all practical purposes, outplayed for the whole of the game. Every now and again they put in nice work, the left wing being the more prominent, but as indicated by the number of shots dealt with by Haddow the visitors were not crack marksmen. But for Williams, whose patronymic is synonymous with fine custodianship at Turf Moor, Luton would have suffered a heavy defeat, and many of his saves were brilliantly executed. He had five times the number of shots that fell to Haddow to deal with, and no disgrace would have attached to the goal-keeper if some of them had taken effect. So far as the visitors were concerned, Williams's behaviour was the feature of the game. Burnley were never stretched, but they played well, though at times they were inclined to indulge in pure gallery play. Next to the goal-keeper I liked McEwen, Stewart, and the outside left best, who showed a good turn of speed and a fair acquaintance of the whereabouts of the goal. The Luton men are a rather heavy lot, and with such a fine defence they should bother some of the teams in the Second Division, and especially at home."

The *Burnley Gazette* has the following: "The game, generally, was of a disappointing character. With the exception of about the first 15 minutes, Luton were outclassed all through. Burnley's second goal seemed to knock them out of time altogether, and there were very few real triers in the team afterwards. The margin, though a big one, no more than represents the difference between the two teams. The visitors are a bigger and a heavier lot of players than Burnley, and that Newton Heath affair led one to expect a different display from them. Nor was the game very pleasantly conducted. McCartney showed a lot of temper towards the close, and one or two of the players were spoken to by the referee. The Burnley men showed good form all round, and I vote the game a better one than that at Darwen.

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

In writing last week in anticipation of the visit of the Lutonians to Burnley, I said that it would be absurd to expect the "stripes" to win. In giving utterance to this opinion I do not seem to have coincided with the ideas of certain folks in this locality whose enthusiasm outruns their discretion. Again I say it was absurd to entertain the notion that Luton had more than an outside chance of winning at Burnley.

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Let us for a moment examine the facts. Prior to Saturday the Burnley men had played half-a-dozen matches or so on their own ground in the Second League and not only had they not lost but almost invariably had succeeded in piling up heavy scores against their opponents. Indeed they had succumbed but once and that to Grimsby at the Fishermen's town, their record reading as follows:—Played 11, won 9, drawn 1, lost 1, goals for 28, against 7, points 19. This was as compared with the Luton figures as follows:—Played 7, won 2, drawn 2, lost 3, goals for 8, against 10, points 6.

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Any unprejudiced person comparing the figures must be compelled to admit that the chances were not very strongly in favour of Luton obtaining a victory against the ex-First Leaguers, more especially when it was borne in mind that the encounter had to take place on the Burnley ground. Still, the local players started on their long journey with feelings of confidence and it is possible this had something to do with engendering like feelings in the minds of their most ardent supporters.

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The fact need not be reiterated, perhaps, that there had been some re-arrangement of the forward rank on the part of the Lutonians. Coupar was dropped out and Birch was introduced at inside-left, McInnes being given as a partner to Gallacher. This was an arrangement which it was thought would work well.

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I am not surprised to learn that though the Luton defence was very strong the attack was especially weak, and that bad shooting characterised the whole of the Luton players. This may seem a somewhat superfluous observation, perhaps, when it is remembered that the score-sheet remained a blank so far as the Luton players are concerned—a significant enough position.

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It is just here, indeed, that I have been for some time pointing out Luton's weakness. It is, of course, obvious enough to most people who know anything about football; but there some who persist in the declaration that the Luton forwards are quite good enough if they would only settle down to their work. I wish I could believe this. It is a very striking fact that in almost the whole of the criticisms that have been written concerning Saturday's match we find the central point is a comment upon the absolute weakness of the Luton forwards.

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I had been hoping to learn that a strong centre-forward would be engaged ere long. I regret to be informed that there now exists very little possibility of this happening. Of course one is not silly enough to imagine that one strong forward will make an attack any more than that one swallow makes a summer, but the efforts of the forwards would assuredly be infinitely better if they were led on by a competent centre-man.

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But to return to Saturday's match. It seems that the honours pretty much were with Williams, who gave what is admitted by all the critics to have been a magnificent exhibition. He was not to be blamed for any of the goals which scored; indeed, had he let through other shots which he saved his comrades could not have been justified in saying very much.

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The Luton backs gave a capital show, though it was to be regretted that one of them scored against his own side. The halves are all three extremely well spoken of, Stewart and Davies doing particularly useful work.

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So far as the forwards are concerned the only two who are specially mentioned in terms of praise are Ekins and Birch, the left-wingers. This is especially worthy of note seeing that McInnes and Gallacher were on the opposite wing. Little does not seem to have attracted the notice of the critics at all.

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As to the way in which the match had been looked forward to I quote the following from a special report in a contemporary: "There was a certain amount of fear among the local supporters, who looked upon Luton as being quite capable of bringing off a surprise, and I am told that the officials gave forth an order just prior to the match to their players that they must not by any means hold the visitors lightly."

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The Burnley men appear to have won with consummate ease. After obtaining the lead in the first half they did not seriously trouble themselves until after the interval, but the latter part of the game consisted of an almost continuous bombardment of the Luton goal. This is by no means pleasant reading for me and I regret that we have not a team that will make a better show than this.

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The League table to date is as follows:—

	Plyd.	Won	Drn.	Lost	Goals.	
					For Agst.	Pts.
Burnley.....	12	10	1	1	32 .. 7	21
Manchester City..	10	8	1	1	29 .. 7	17
Small Heath	10	7	1	2	19 .. 15	15
Newcastle United	10	7	1	2	18 .. 11	15
Grimsby Town ..	11	6	1	4	21 .. 16	13
Woolwich Arsenal	12	5	2	5	23 .. 22	12
Newton Heath ..	11	5	1	5	21 .. 9	11
Darwen.....	11	4	2	5	14 .. 27	10
Leicester Fosse ..	9	3	3	3	13 .. 9	9
Walsall.....	12	4	0	8	23 .. 29	8
Loughborough ..	10	3	1	6	9 .. 18	7
Luton	8	2	2	4	8 .. 14	6
Gainsboro' Trinity	9	3	0	6	16 .. 22	6
Lincoln City	10	2	2	6	15 .. 27	6
Blackpool.....	10	2	1	7	11 .. 24	5
Barton Swifts....	9	1	1	7	8 .. 23	3

The other Second League matches resulted as follows:—Leicester Fosse and Loughborough drew at Loughborough at one all, Woolwich Arsenal, playing at home, defeated Walsall by four to none, Newcastle United beat Newton Heath at Clayton by a goal to nothing, Darwen scored three to one against Blackpool, Grimsby Town obtained the same figures against Small Heath, and Lincoln City had the advantage of Gainsborough Trinity by two goals to one.



With regard to Burnley the following quotation from the *Athletic News* will be interesting:—"They are very much in earnest, and like the Villa in the premier League, they have at home bagged every possible point in the Second League. The visit of Luton supplied them with a very simple victory, and they have now more goals placed to their credit than any other member of either division. At Turf Moor they have piled on as many as 26 goals to three, only Blackpool, Manchester City, and Walsall having scored against them—once each."



Having dealt with the doleful past let us for a moment turn our thoughts to the future. To-morrow is to be determined which of the Luton or Tottenham clubs shall become champions of the Ninth Division of the English Cup—of course I know this is but the semi-final, but the winners of to-morrow will have little or no difficulty in disposing of the winners of the other tie. It is as well, perhaps, that the match should be fixed to take place at Tottenham, for the 'Spurs will be certain of a "bumper" gate. The chances are that Luton will profit considerably more by this fact than they would have done had the match been played at Luton.



What are the prospects of winning? Some who bear in mind the easy fashion in which the 'Spurs were routed a few weeks ago will deem the question ridiculous and will argue that a team which will succumb by five goals to none one month is not likely to turn the tables on its conquerors the next.



This is all very well, but those who adopt such an attitude may be warned that there is something of the unreasonable about their position. Those of us who are conversant with the doings of the 'Spurs know perfectly well that they are hard cup-fighters. We bear in mind that last season the Lutonians always held the upper hand and that they have started well this season; but at the same time it must not be overlooked that to-morrow's game is away from home, which as a rule means a deal to a club. Then it is also a cup-tie, a matter of considerable significance.



I should not like to go the length of saying that I think Luton will lose. I do not think they will, but I must warn the players against entertaining the idea that they have a soft thing on. The 'Spurs did exceedingly well last Saturday to draw with Bristol City, who are playing a magnificent game, and though I expect to see the Luton "stripes" come out right side up I am not flattering myself with the idea that the score will be a repetition of that which applied to the first meeting of the season between the teams.



The local correspondent of the *Morning Leader* gave utterance to the thought that the 'Spurs are not likely to "paint the town red." I hope that in this instance the prophet is to be relied upon. It would be a fearful blow to us to bear if the 'Spurs were to manage to snatch a victory. It means a good deal to them also, however, and we must anticipate a keen struggle. That the visitors may win is my very earnest desire.





By the way, readers will have the choice of two routes to Tottenham, both the Great Northern and the Midland Railways giving facilities. The Northern will run to Finsbury Park, while the Midland announce two through trains to South Tottenham. There are cheap fares, and no doubt these will be largely taken advantage of. There ought to be a record "gate." The kick-off is to be at 2.45.



The name of Molyneux, the 3rd Grenadiers' centre, has been much talked of in Luton during the last two or three weeks. I learn that he has been registered by Bristol City. I had been hoping that Luton would have got him.



The team for to-morrow will be as follows:—Goal, Williams; backs, McCartney and McEwen; half-backs, Davies, Stewart and Docherty; forwards, Gallacher and Coupar (right), Little (centre), McInnes and Ekins (left). Perrins will accompany the team as reserve.



I was somewhat surprised to learn on Wednesday morning that Clark had disappeared from the town. It is rumoured that he has returned home in order to take up some employment. The local executive has suspended him *sine die* and reported him to the English and Scottish Associations. I am told that what with transfer fees and wages Clark has cost the club somewhere about £100.



At a meeting of the United League Management Committee on Monday permission was given for Millwall v. Loughborough to alter dates of matches to November 20th, at Loughborough, and December 11th, at Millwall. Referees for December were appointed as follows:—December 4th, Tottenham v. Wellingborough, Mr. A. C. Knight; 6th, Luton v. Rushden, Mr. T. Saywell; 11th, Millwall v. Loughborough, Mr. T. Saywell; 13th, Kettering v. Luton, Mr. Rudkin; 13th, Woolwich v. Rushden, Mr. Walford; 20th, Woolwich v. Southampton, Mr. Peters; 25th, Woolwich v. Tottenham, Mr. S. R. Carr; 28th, Luton v. Loughborough, Mr. Kingscott; 29th, Southampton v. Rushden, Mr. F. W. Beardsley. It appears that F. Molyneux has been registered by Luton.