

THE LEAGUE.—SECOND DIVISION.

BURNLEY v. LUTON.

Played at Burnley on Saturday. Result:—

Burnley	4 goals.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Burnley—Haddock, goal; Reynolds and McClinton, backs; O'Rourke, Taylor and Livingstone, half-backs; Morrison and Ross (right); Toman (centre), Bowes and Place (left), forwards.

Luton—Williams, goal; McCartney and McEwen, backs; Davies, Stewart and Docherty, half-backs; Gallacher, McInnes (right), Little (centre), Birch and Ekins (left), forwards.

Referee, Mr. Ramsbottom, Liverpool.

I suppose there were not many persons who really expected Luton to bring off a win at Turf Moor on Saturday, although locally there was a feeling that the team of inconsistencies might be inconsistent once again, and do something to cause consternation among the prophets and perplex the public generally. But for once, Luton were consistent.

Certainly, the outlook for the team when they left Luton on Friday was not a particularly bright one. Burnley had only sustained one defeat in the League matches, and that away from home. On their own ground they had beaten Blackpool by 5 goals to 1, Woolwich Arsenal by 5 to 0, Newcastle by 3 to 0, Walsall by 4 to 1, Burton Swifts by 2 to 0, and Manchester City by 3 to 1.

It was their narrow margin over the Burton Swifts which gave the visiting team some degree of confidence. Luton knew perfectly well that they themselves ought to have romped round the Burton men, and if Burnley could only beat the Swifts by 2 to 0, why then Luton ought to have a chance. But it is very often the case that things do not work out in the field as they do on paper.

A writer in a Lancashire journal says:—"Luton were quite capable of bringing off a surprise—that was fully realised at Burnley—and they meant doing so if they possibly could; for according to a letter which a Burnley supporter received from a Luton resident during the week, they meant giving the Turf Moor brigade a similar dose to that they administered to the Heathens."

If that Luton resident had all that amount of faith last week, I wonder to what extent his belief in the capabilities of the Luton team went at the beginning of the season. But the prognostication on this occasion, like similar forecasts at other times, was not justified by the event, for Luton did not make Burnley bite the dust, and never came near it.

The weather at Burnley was beautifully fine, and there was scarcely a breath of wind. The gate, however, was not a large one, as Burnley gates go. When hostilities commenced, the crowd numbered about five thousand, and perhaps another thousand put in an appearance before the game had been long in progress.

Luton won the toss, but, with very questionable judgment, elected to play uphill in the first half. The Burnley custodian was the first to be visited, but Ekins was closely pressed, and unable to get in his shot. McEwen was next prominent with a fine return, and a smart piece of work by Stewart placed Gallacher and McInnes on the attack, but the final effort was wide of the mark.

Morrison got away from the goal-kick, and put in a good centre, which Place failed to turn to account. The game at this time was very fast, and the ball was quickly returned from one end to the other. Once or twice the Luton left wing threatened danger, but eventually they were repulsed. The Burnley left responded, and forced a corner. This was the preliminary to a hot attack on the Luton goal, which gave Williams an opportunity of showing his skill as a custodian.

For some time, the play was confined to the

For some time, the play was confined to the Luton territory, but the defence was very fine, and equal to all the demands made upon it. One close lightning delivery by Place, which had seemed a certain goal, was, to the surprise of all, caught and thrown away by Williams. At last Ekins got away, and made a brilliant run, being altogether too fast for Reynolds, but unfortunately his shot went wide, and thus a capital opening was lost.

* * *

Burnley then returned to the attack, and after sixteen minutes' play, Bowes found an opening, and scored with a fast shot which gave Williams no chance. The play following greatly favoured the home team, and from a foul against Luton, O'Rourke dropped the ball in a cluster of players in the goal mouth, and Place notched a second goal with a fine shot.

* * *

Whatever they might have felt, Luton evinced no signs of discouragement, and McInnes and Little provided the Burnley defence with a good deal of work. Then the homesters made a fresh onslaught, Bowes, Toman and Place all getting in evidence in Williams' vicinity. The Luton left wing created a diversion, but finished up badly, and Burnley were quickly on the aggressive again, only for the forwards to find themselves baffled again and again by the grand defence opposed to them. So half-time arrived with Burnley leading by two goals to nil.

* * *

In the early part of the second half play was of a more even character, the Luton defenders continuing to play up pluckily, and Burnley somewhat slackening their efforts. A fine centre by Place, who received from Toman, was the first thing of note, but Morrison failed to utilise and Burnley were driven back, without, however, being seriously incommoded by the play of the Luton forwards.

* * *

When the homesters again got on the aggressive, Toman was badly fouled just outside the twelve yards' line, and the free kick came to nothing. Almost immediately, however, a good shot was put in, and Williams saved well. Following an unsuccessful raid upon the Burnley goal, Morrison obtained possession of the ball, and made a fine run, but was so bothered by Davies, that the effort proved fruitless.

* * *

Luton responded, without effect, and then McLintock netted the ball from a free kick, but as no one touched, the score remained unaltered. The visitors, hereabouts were individually responsible for some good efforts, but there was an entire lack of combination, and the display of the forwards was feeble in the extreme, the two or three shots that did reach the Burnley custodian being such very tame affairs that he had no difficulty in saving.

* * *

When the Luton end was again visited, Williams gave a remarkably good exhibition, and the way in which he disposed of two lightning shots from Toman and Ross, showed that he had all his wits about him. He was beaten at last, however, not by a Burnley forward, but by one of his own backs, McCartney, in trying to clear, having the misfortune to put the leather through his own goal, right over the head of Williams, who made a desperate but unsuccessful attempt to reach it. During the last twenty minutes, nearly all the play was at the Luton end, Burnley having four corners one after the other, neither of which led to anything tangible.

* * *

But just before the finish, there was a scrimmage, and from this Toman touched through the fourth goal. There was nothing else worthy of mention, and Luton retired defeated by four goals to none, a slightly better result than that which the Arsenal had obtained on the same ground.

* * *

One writer, whilst admitting that the Luton defence was magnificent, says "it was very rarely the visitors got near Haddow," and "their shooting was very much off the target." Another says, "the visitors showed more in defence than attack, in which they were very feeble," and "when it came to shooting the goal could not be found." A third says "Luton got in a few runs, but shaped badly at goal-getting."

* * *

"The Spy" in the "Morning Leader" writes: "All through Luton played a strong, hard game, and their defence, although it was penetrated four

times, was of the most stubborn description. There was not a bad player among either of the halves or backs. Davis 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. McEwen only made one mistake, and that lost 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 commendable 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-maneuvred the opposing defenders, but these fine efforts resulted in an ignominious failure in front of goal."

The match proves what we have unfortunately known all along, namely, that the Luton forwards are not a patch on the front string of last year. With perhaps a single exception they seem to have lost all their dash, all their combination, and almost every other quality which makes for goal-getting.

We have recognised that in Luton long ago, but possibly it is as well to get our opinion confirmed in quarters where the team is entirely unknown, and where the comments must be absolutely free from anything like prejudice, or anything in the nature of preconceived opinions. And the Northern papers, with one accord, say the Luton forwards were nowhere.

Personally, I don't think the whole of the forwards are equally to blame. McInnes I regard as being one of the smartest men in the team, and Gallacher and Ekins both do well when they get the opportunity, but what they want is more support. Coupar would play a first-rate game, if he would but rid himself of his dribbling propensities, but Little is terribly uncertain. He played a fine game against the Arsenal at Plumstead, and was almost as good against Tottenham Hotspur on the following Monday, but for the rest his show has been of a very indifferent character.

What Luton want are two thoroughly good inside men, and until they are obtained, I am afraid we shall have to face fresh disasters. Birch, I believe, would prove a very useful man if he were properly trained, and he is always a trier, but under present conditions he is not to be depended upon.

The "Burnley Gazette," in commenting on the match, says:—"The game, generally, was of a disappointing character. With the exception of about the first fifteen minutes, Luton were out-classed 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 gate receipts amounted to over £90.

I will just quote one other comment on the Burnley game, in order to do justice to Williams, who really gave a first-class exhibition. The "Athletic News" says:—"The feature of the match was Williams' 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 McEwen, Stewart, and the outside-left in most esteem."

Newton Heath never seem to have got over their beating by Luton. On Saturday they again had to knuckle under on their own ground, Newcastle United beating them by a goal to nil. Loughborough at home played a surprisingly good game against Leicester Fosse, and the result was a draw at one goal all. Woolwich Arsenal beat Walsall by 4 goals to nil, Grimsby Town beat Small Heath by 3 to 1, Darwen beat Blackpool by 3 to 1, and Lincoln City beat Gainsborough Trinity by 2 to 1. The League table now reads as follows:—