

FOOTBALL.

LUTONIANS AT GAINSBOROUGH.

A BRILLIANT VICTORY.

On Saturday the wearers of the "stripes" had to make the journey to Gainsborough in order to decide their first League game of the season with the Trinity team of the Lincolnshire town. The visit was eminently satisfactory to the Lutonians, for a victory was secured by three goals to two with the concomitant couple of League points, this making four points that have been obtained in two Saturdays. The outcome is at once gratifying and encouraging. In beating the Trinitarians at Gainsborough the locals went one better than their predecessors of last season, for the last year's team could only manage to effect a draw of three goals all despite the fact that they had beaten the Lincolnshire men easily enough when they visited Luton. Let it not be thought, however, that we are detracting from the merit of the draw, which was a very fine performance indeed. But that the "stripes" have improved upon it by snatching a win is highly creditable to the newcomers and pleasing to their supporters. It was no fluke, either, for the winners were a good deal the better side on the day's play, the homesters being somewhat inferior to the lot that did battle for the Trinitarians a year ago. The Lutonians were at somewhat of a disadvantage, for they were without Ekins and Williams (both on the injured list). The visitors set out on their long journey by the Great Northern train leaving Luton at 8.37, a saloon being placed at their disposal. Shortly before mid-day luncheon was partaken of in the saloon, a hot repast having been provided at Grantham. After a ride of close upon five hours' duration Gainsborough was reached. There was an hour to wait ere the time for the kick-off, and the players quietly made their way to the ground. The weather was brilliantly fine and everything was in favour of a good game. A glance at the pitch, however, showed that it is not so well tended as that at Luton, the grass being extremely long at parts. Half an hour before the hour for commencing the ground was empty; but afterwards spectators came in freely and when 3 o'clock came there was a goodly crowd present, about a couple of thousand surrounding the ropes and being accommodated on the diminutive "grand stands."

The sides were made up thus:—

Gainsborough Trinity: Goal, Richardson; backs, Bailey and Pumfrey; half-backs, Foulstone, Morris and Munro; forwards, Wigmore and Walters (right), Scott (centre), Hughes and Foxhall (left).

Luton Town: Goal, Perkins; backs, Dow and Moore; half-backs, C. Ford, Sharp and Hewitt; forwards, Durrant and McInnes (right wing), Kemplay (centre), W. Ford and Brock (left wing).

Referee, Mr. J. Cowley.

The Gainsborough lot wore blue. The custodian was stated to be a reserve, and Wigmore had been taken from the centre forward position to outside right. The home team won the toss, which gave them a distinct advantage, the sun shining brightly in the faces of the Luton men in the first half. Early in the game the visitors advanced well and Durrant was fouled when he had managed to get close to goal and was looking dangerous. From the free-kick C. Ford sent over the bar. The "stripes" returned to the attack and W. Ford steered wide with a good effort. The same player banged the ball into the net just after; but Durrant had been off-side and so the goal did not count. Dow relieved well when the Gainsborough men broke away soon afterwards. The homesters were now better together than at the start and they came down again in good style. Their methods were not very scientific; but they possessed plenty of pluck and dash and advanced repeatedly. A corner to the homesters proved fruitless, and shortly afterwards Wigmore missed by very little. The same player, after a capital exhibition by the home front rank, sent into Perkins's hands. Extremely pretty forward play by the "stripes" evoked admiration, following which Foxhall put himself off-side with the usual result. The Lincolnshire team were proving very determined; they made their way down in first-rate fashion, but nothing beyond a goal-kick followed. McInnes was nastily fouled by Foxhall. Gainsborough again attacked; but off-side stopped them when close to goal. Moore was pulled up for fouling. The ball was well placed from the free-kick, but no score occurred. C. Ford was penalised for a foul throw and a sturdy attack followed from the Trinitarians, who were playing a smart game. Following a foul against Hewitt (who was working splendidly) the homesters came very near to scoring, the ball being forced over the line by Foxhall close to goal. Foulstone had a shy at goal, which proved useless, while Brock was stopped for deliberately handling the ball. Hughes managed to break away when the game had been in progress some 20 minutes and he had no difficulty in registering the first goal of the match. This success served to stimulate the locals, who now played in much better style than formerly, their combination showing a great improvement. The Lutonians were by no means dispirited; on the contrary they infused more spirit into their display and played in cool, confident style. Foxhall steered over the bar, and a corner next fell to the Gainsborough men, Wigmore shooting a bit wide. Hewitt was again pulled up for fouling. Afterwards the "stripes" went away by neat passing; but McInnes was unlucky enough to get off-side, and so a magnificent effort from him was unproductive. Morris was stopped for indulging in foul play, the ball being forced over the home line after this. C. Ford followed this up by directing a beauty at the Gainsborough goal. In the next minute the Luton captain got away and scored neatly with a side foot kick, thus bringing the scores level. Hewitt incurred the displeasure of the referee by fouling an opponent, as also did Dow. Brock was responsible for a bad mistake, following which Perkins was called upon to clear, a task which he discharged in excellent style. Durrant, who had been exhibiting well, got clear and sent in a beauty which was only disposed of with difficulty, a corner following. This proved nugatory. A brief suspension was brought about by Kemplay getting injured. From a nice centre by Brock the ball was got away well; but it was returned almost at once, and then Hewitt shot wide of the mark. The referee was responsible for an extraordinary decision soon afterwards. A Lutonian had taken possession of the ball when half a dozen Trinitarians were in front of him, and the knight of the whistle penalised him, at which the crowd laughed boisterously. W. Ford very nearly succeeded in scoring with a very hot shot. As the interval was approaching Moore gave away a corner, and immediately after the locals had a narrow escape of scoring. A brilliant attempt by Hewitt missed by inches, and another try by the same player landed the ball on the net just above the custodian's head. At half-time the positions were:—

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LUTON, 1; GAINSBOROUGH, 1.

Shortly after the re-start Sharp was very badly kicked; but with that pluckiness which had been characteristic of his play throughout the afternoon the centre-half went on playing. A free-kick against the visitors enabled the "blues" to attack; but it was not for long, the defenders easily repelling the home forwards. C. Ford was very properly stopped for jumping. From the kick Perkins was tested, the custodian bringing about a good clearance. W. Ford secured and dispatched a beauty at Richardson which gave that young gentleman no end of anxiety—but he managed to save. Hands against Moore was followed by a good long shot being sent in from the home right, the ball finding its way into Perkins's hands. Durrant made an exceedingly pretty run and centred to Kemplay, who shot hard. Richardson was on the alert, though, and effected a capital save, W. Ford winding up the assault by kicking the ball over the cross-bar. Durrant just afterwards repeated his exhibition and wound up with a glorious centre. From this Kemplay headed through, and thus for the first time the visitors secured the lead. The "blues" played up desperately and forced a corner. Though this proved unfruitful, they continued the pressure for a while, the leather being eventually forced behind. Then it was Luton's turn. A corner to the "stripes" was cleverly obtained; but it was not improved upon. Perkins came out when the opposition forwards were advancing in line, and a splendid clearance was placed to the credit of the Luton goalkeeper. Durrant was somewhat badly charged over, and shortly after he and an opponent got at loggerheads, the intervention of the referee being requisite. From a flag-kick to Luton C. Ford sent over, and a second corner was equally unproductive. Moore brought off a first-class save; but the ball was returned and kicked into the side of the Luton net. W. Ford once more shot too high, while Perkins effected a brilliant save. From a very pretty centre by Brock McInnes shot just wide, while from another centre from the left Durrant sent over the goal-line. The visitors maintained the pressure and shot splendidly, though without penetrating the defence. Gainsborough advanced, only to be checked by off-side. The homesters once more became conspicuous and sent the ball spinning across the mouth of goal, Foulstone following up with an especially warm shot which travelled wide of the mark. Following some scrambling play Foxhall profited by a mistake on the part of Moore and brought the scores level at two all. The strangers were not content to leave the position thus, and in a minute or two they had once more obtained the lead. The score came from another middle by Durrant, the finishing touch being put on by Brock. The Lutonians were now manifesting their superiority, and the home fortress experienced some very narrow escapes. An especially good try was grandly dealt with by Richardson. Durrant put an end to a sturdy attack by sending out heavily. Luton had a narrow escape later on, Perkins almost letting the ball through. Gainsborough, playing a better game subsequently, experienced some very hard luck. From a foul against the "stripes" a corner accrued, and the "blues" tried hard to equalise; but their efforts were all unavailing. Another first-rate try by the locals ended in the ball going skyward. When the Lutonians were pressing and had obtained a corner, C. Ford jumped at an adversary in very silly style, and he was spoken to by the referee in consequence. Durrant put in a good run and terminal shot, while the "blues" retaliated, Perkins being called upon to clear his lines. In the last minute of the game a most exciting incident occurred. A corner fell to the locals and was splendidly placed, the ball eventually being got away by the goalkeeper. The home lot made confident appeals for a goal, alleging that the ball had gone through. The referee consulted one of the linesmen; but it seemed that this was in regard to time, and not to the appeal for a point, which he had no hesitation in disallowing. There was some disagreement expressed, and it was only natural that disappointment should be felt; but there is no doubt in the minds of the Lutonians at least that the official was correct. When the whistle sounded the score read thus:—

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

The week's work by the "stripes" is again eminently satisfactory, both matches having been won with a gross score of seven goals to two, and, what is more, to the point, a good step has been taken up the Second League ladder.

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The outcome of the journey to Gainsborough was very pleasing, and that the better side won nobody very seriously disputed. Indeed, some of the local supporters were profuse in their expressions of admiration of the Lutonians.

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I was very hopeful, after the fine display of the previous week, and some of my friends considered my optimism exaggerated. The result showed that one's confidence in the ability of the "stripes" was not a whit too strong.

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The journey to the Lincolnshire town was very enjoyable. The new men are a decent set of fellows, and they were in capital spirits. The luncheon aboard the train was one of the pleasantest items in the day's programme, and that it was heartily enjoyed can be vouched for.

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It was a happy idea of Mr. Shackleton to make the arrangement. Grantham was reached before mid-day, and as the match was not timed to commence until 3 o'clock, there was ample time for the digestive process to work in comfort. The players were delighted with their treatment.

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Gainsborough was reached at about half-past 1, and some of us went on a touring expedition. But there was little to see except the church, where some photographs were taken by an enthusiast. I should like to reproduce one at least; but we should hear more about picture galleries and self-glorification, so I refrain.

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The Gainsborough ground is not a patch upon that of the Lutonians. A portion had been mown for cricket purposes; but the ends were in a very bad state, the grass being long. This had a certain effect upon the play, short passing being rendered difficult.

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The Luton team was short of Williams and Ekins, Moore and Brock being introduced in their places. The home side was stated to be constituted similarly to that of last season, though it was confessed that the eleven was not so formidable.

So it proved. The Trinitarians played a bold, dashing game of the kick and rush order, and it was not surprising that spectators should comment upon the neatness of the Luton forward display. The homesters indulged in some ugly rushes at times; but for the most part the visitors' defence was all that could be desired.

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It must be confessed that the early portion of the first half was somewhat in favour of the locals, who went off extremely well. Afterwards Luton settled down and a finely fought game was witnessed.

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McInnes had the honour of opening the Luton scoring, and his was a very neat side-foot goal. Kemplay secured the second and Brock the third, both coming from centres by Durrant.

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The Lutonians had an anxious moment or two at the finish when the ball was dropped into the mouth of goal from a corner-kick. Many spectators thought Perkins let the ball through; but the referee did not think so, nor did I.

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The second of the Gainsborough goals was obtained owing to a mistake by Moore, who otherwise played a rattling good game. The Luton goals were beauties; there was nothing soft about them.

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There was not much amiss with the display by the winners. Brock was somewhat weak prior to the interval; but he improved greatly afterwards. His centring was not invariably good, however.

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Kemplay played a cool, steady game, and he fed his wings judiciously. What I like about him is that he does not seem to know what fear is. The way in which he dashed at the Trinity backs was a treat to witness.

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W. Ford played in good style, more especially in the second half, while the combination on the right was capital. Durrant's centres were always dangerous.

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Amongst the halves first word is deserved by Sharp, who calls for praise by the way in which he kept up to his forwards. He was nastily kicked early in the second half; but he stoically bore the pain and obeyed his captain's appeal to "try to work it off."

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Hewitt was as hard a worker as ever. He performed first-rate service down the line. C. Ford was to be found in the thick of the fray always, and he did well. It is a pity, however, that he will not refrain from jumping. Nothing is gained by it.

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Dow was seen to great advantage. He kicked well and timed his charges accurately. Some of his head work was very pretty. He is a class back and is a great acquisition to the team. What I cannot understand is how Glossop came to let him go.

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Moore played in better style than previously this season, some of his kicking being superb. Perkins was in good fettle in goal.

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The Gainsborough custodian and backs did well and the halves were a fair trio; but I was not very favourably impressed with the forwards. They did not compare very well with the Luton front string.

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The return journey was very pleasantly passed, and home was reached at about 11.30. We were agreed that it was quite a pleasure to travel with the men, their conduct in the saloon being infinitely better than that of last year's lot. I am glad to be able to say this.

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As a matter of fact, it is being generally remarked in Luton amongst those who profess an interest in football that the team is composed of more respectable men than was the case last season. This is good hearing, for the residents are more likely to support a team of decent, well-behaved young fellows who can be depended upon to try their utmost.

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The *Daily Mail* says: "A draw would have been a correct ending, and a draw, my correspondent says, it should have been, for Trinity netted the ball from a corner in the last minute, and the referee made a mistake in not allowing the point." The referee made no mistake, and the statement that the ball was netted is—to put it mildly—a perversion of the truth.

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"Rover" refers to the match in this way, after condoling with the Arsenal on the defeat at Manchester:—"I can, however, cordially congratulate Luton on their win over Gainsborough at the seaport town. It is true that Gainsborough are rather weak and have not yet won a match, but to win a match on any kind of foreign soil now-a-days is something to be proud of, and I have no doubt the victory will do Luton a lot of good."

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The *Daily Chronicle* writes:—"Luton gained a splendid success at Gainsborough, Kemplay, the ex-Middlesborough amateur, scoring the second goal. Before the season commenced, I expected a good deal from Luton. The team will do well."

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"Lincolnshire Echoes" in the *Athletic News* says:—"There was only a difference of a goal at the finish, but there might be said to be quite two goals difference between the teams on Saturday's play." As to the Luton forwards the paper says: "They were very fast in their play, and very accurate in their shooting. They dallied too much on occasions, and the rather lumpy nature of the ground seemed to trouble them somewhat, but there was no erratic shooting, and every shot had some sting in it. Durrant was very clever on the right, and was pulled up for off-side once or twice when the point was very questionable. The halves were a clever trio, and the backs moderately good."

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