

FOOTBALL.

THE LEAGUE—DIVISION II.

SMALL HEATH v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Small Heath on Saturday. Result:

Small Heath 9 goals.

Luton Town..... nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Small Heath: Clutterbuck; Archer and Pratt; Walton, Leake and Robinson; Inglis, Gardner, M'Roberts, Abbott and Wharton.

Luton: Perkins; Dow and Moore; C. Ford, W. Ford and Crump; Durrant, McInnes, Galbraith, Hewitt and Ekins.

Referee, Mr. Armitt.

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No one in Luton, I suppose, wants to hear a great deal about the match at Small Heath, where Luton made about the most ignominious display a Luton team ever has made. When the telegraph brought the news on Saturday, those who had been eagerly awaiting the result, could scarcely believe the evidence of their own senses. Surely there must be some mistake! Luton could never have allowed so many goals to be chalked up against them.

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No, it was true, and there was no getting over it. Perhaps some of the men were badly injured, and Luton had to face the music with half a team! No, there was not a single extenuating circumstance. Luton were beaten on their merits, or their want of merit, and they knuckled under because they allowed the Heathens to get the upper hand at the start, and because they (the Lutonians) then became demoralised, and could make no resistance against a team which knew what it was about.

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At the start, Luton did get away, and a centre by Durrant placed the Small Heath goal in danger, but that was about the only time it was in danger during the whole afternoon. The Heathen forwards soon began to feel their feet, and then they went for the goal with a determination which was completely lacking on the part of the opposing quintet, who passed and passed and passed again, and still got no "forrarder."

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Four times the homesters found the net during the first half, and when the game was resumed, it may be imagined that Luton were hardly in the frame of mind to make a better display. As a matter of fact, the Heathens experienced comparatively little difficulty in scoring another five goals, making a total of nine, or half as many as they had placed to their credit in all their other nine matches put together.

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Whatever may be said against the Luton team, it cannot be denied that they have made two records. The first was when they beat Darwen by eight goals to one. No team in the League had previously registered so many goals this season, and that record stood until Saturday, when Luton created a fresh one by allowing more goals to be scored against them than any other Club could boast of. It is a little bewildering to the student of form, and how in face of facts like this coupon-fillers can say they depend upon skill in forecasting results, I can't for the life of me imagine.

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The Luton forwards could never get into going order on Saturday, and the half-backs were not much better. W. Ford did his level best, and his brother worked hard without much success, but Crump was powerfully weak, if I may use an Irishism. The backs played a fairly good game—quite as good as could have been expected under the circumstances—and there was nothing to complain of with respect to Perkins. Small Heath played as well as a winning team always does under such conditions.

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Speaking of the Small Heath match, the "Birmingham Daily Mail" says:—"Luton would return to the seat of the straw-hat industry with a higher opinion of Small Heath than the score in the match with Walsall would have given them. They certainly are not at present the wooden-spoonists in the Second League—in fact, they are only three points removed from Small Heath—but on to-day's form they seem almost certain to qualify for the least-desired of honours. Their defence was weak, while that of Small Heath is always thought a strong point. That may account in some way for the large difference in the scores, but the visiting forwards lacked cohesion, and it was an undoubted fact that the Coventry-road men were found in the best of humours."