

Football



SECOND LEAGUE.

SMALL HEATH v. LUTON.

ANOTHER AWFUL COLLAPSE.

Small Heath met Luton on the Coventry-road ground, Birmingham, on Saturday afternoon, in the Second League competition. An important change was made in the home team. Walton, who had previously played forward, was sent to half-back, and his place in the front line was taken by Gardner, a youth from the Reserves. The spectators were not numerous, barely reaching 4,000, when the elevens faced each other as follows:

Small Heath: Clutterbuck; Pratt and Archer; Walton, Leake and Robertson; Inglis, Gardner, McRoberts, Abbott and Wharton.

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

Referee: Mr. T. Armitt.

Luton started the game, and at once became aggressive, running into the Small Heath quarters and making several smart attacks. The backs, however, kept them at bay, and one onslaught, which looked particularly promising, was spoilt by the ball being skied over the bar. Then Small Heath began to retaliate. Wharton, obtaining possession of the ball, centred nicely to McRoberts, who returned it to him, and the left-winger again centreing beautifully, Gardner came in with a rush and banged the ball into the net. A few minutes afterwards the home forwards had another rush for the Luton goal, and Moore, in trying to save kicked the ball between his own posts.

These two goals were scored within 10 minutes of the start, and Small Heath, with this advantage, played with considerable energy. One of their attacks—the result of a good piece of work by Wharton—ended in Abbott narrowly missing the goal with a swift shot. At another time Robertson shot wide. Then Luton ran away, and by clever combination worked the ball into their opponents' quarters, but there they found Archer too strong. Still they tried to reach Clutterbuck, and this time were stopped by Pratt, who kicked strongly and well.

The game, which was not over-exciting, continued to be waged for the most part round the Luton goal-keeper. Two or three times he had to save smartly, Inglis and Gardner sending in shots which narrowly missed their mark. At last, during an exciting scrimmage in the mouth of the Luton goal, Wharton scored the third point for his side. The fourth came a minute afterwards, Inglis putting the finishing touch to a grand centre of Abbott's. Small Heath continued to have the best of matters up to half-time, which arrived with the score:

SMALL HEATH	..	..	4 goals
LUTON	..	..	0 ..

After the interval Wharton was the first to become conspicuous. A series of throws-in followed, which enabled Luton to work their way down. Galbraith tried a long shot, which went harmlessly outside. Then Small Heath raced swiftly up the field, but Dow just succeeded in stopping their rush, and in another moment Moore was called upon to exercise his defensive abilities. A fine shot by Wharton seemed to be travelling into the net when Inglis got clearly offside. Another grand run and centre by Wharton brought out Perkins, who removed the danger. Ekins and Hewitt ran down the Luton left, only to be stopped by Archer, after which Galbraith shot out.

McRoberts gained applause for fine centre play. Warm work followed in the Luton quarters, where Walton centred into the goal-mouth, but Inglis failed to get the ball into the net. He made amends soon afterwards by a neat centre, which McRoberts touched between the posts, thus scoring the fifth goal for his side. Hardly had the ball been set going again when Robertson, out of a scrimmage, banged it for the sixth time into the Luton net. Then after an interval of uninteresting play a loud cheer burst from the spectators as Robertson, with a grand long shot, twenty yards from goal, completely beat the Luton keeper, who had hardly recovered himself when the same half-back sent the ball past him again, bringing Small Heath's total up to eight. The heavy scoring appeared to put a little life into the visiting forwards, who now made several attacks on the Small Heath defence, but this proved equal to all demands, Archer and Pratt presenting a stubborn front, and allowing Clutterbuck no chance of exhibiting his abilities. Small Heath retaliated by scoring their ninth point, thanks to Gardner, who also ran up and shot smartly. When the whistle blew for the finish the score was—

SMALL HEATH	9 goals
LUTON	0 ,,

NOTES.

Messrs. G. Squires and H. T. Shackleton, of Luton, witnessed the catastrophe of the biggest score ever made against their team. Though 9 goals looks a powerful indictment against any defence, I am told that the backs and Perkins played really well, and credit is due to them for avoiding double figures. The halves were hopelessly bad, and the forwards could do nothing with no support and a powerful defence opposed to them.

The "Birmingham Daily Post" says: A game like that witnessed at Small Heath, on Saturday, calls for little comment. Save during the first few minutes, there was, to use a colloquialism, only one side in it, and that was not Luton. The Small Heath players, showing excellent combination, burst through the opposing defence time after time, and finished up with a record of 9 goals to their credit, whilst Luton failed to score. Comparisons are unnecessary, but it may be said that Small Heath were strong both in attack and defence, and Luton were weak. McRoberts led his men finely to the attack, and was assisted ably by Wharton and Gardner, a member of the reserve team, who received promotion and justified it. Abbott was at times responsible for some capital work, but Inglis was, on the whole, rather weak. Robertson was the pick of the Small Heath half-backs, and he himself scored no fewer than three goals. The result came as a great surprise to the home team's supporters, who had not forgotten that Walsall won the Staffordshire Cup tie on the previous Monday.