

FOOTBALL.

LUTON TOWN v. GRIMSBY.

LEAGUE POINTS FOR LUTON.

A CAPITAL DISPLAY.

Dundreary-like, one is forced to the conclusion that the Luton footballers are what no fellow can understand. Who, for instance, after their terrible exhibition at Bristol would have thought them capable of defeating Grimsby in a Second League encounter? Surely nobody. Yet they showed themselves capable of it, and they gave a really creditable display into the bargain when the sides met on Saturday. It was difficult to comprehend how a team capable of doing so well as did the locals on that occasion could have been so soundly thrashed in some other matches. There was not a very large attendance of spectators when the sides lined up—a fact attributable more to the alienation of erstwhile supporters than to the dulness of the weather, for the enthusiast reckes not of atmospheric conditions unless there be blizzards on hand. On Saturday a cold wind prevailed, and this interfered a good deal with the play. It ought to be said before proceeding with the details of the game that the home team lacked the services of Moore, who had been injured in the previous week, and that W. Ford was still unable to appear.

The elevens ranged up thus:—

Luton Town: Goal, Perkins; backs, Dow and Williams; half-backs, C. Ford, Sharp and Crump; forwards, Durrant and McLones (right), Kemplay (centre), Hewitt, and Exins (left).

Grimsby: Goal, Bagshaw; backs, Mountain and Nidd; half-backs, Cherry, Gray and Nelmes; forwards, Jenkinson and Greenwood (right), Cockshutt (centre), Batcliffe and Griffiths (left).

Referee, Mr. J. E. Carpenter (Leicester); neutral linesmen, Messrs. C. Walker (Derby) and J. W. Bailey (Leicester).

The home captain won the toss and took advantage of the wind. The "fishermen" attacked early, and they were looking very dangerous when a foul drove them back. A free-kick for a foul throw in was awarded against Luton, following which Cockshutt missed very badly. Durrant got under weigh well, though only to send behind. Greenwood steered wide, this performance being sandwiched between fouls by Sharp and C. Ford. From the second of these free-kicks the ball was sent up well, and Griffiths experienced no difficulty in lowering Perkins's colours. This initial point was obtained after only a few minutes' play. The Grimbarians were exhibiting good form, their efforts being characterised by considerable dash. Soon after the reverse which has been chronicled the locals commenced to show up more prominently. At one stage Ekins had a narrow escape of scoring. A corner was forced by Durrant, who steered behind the line in taking the flag-kick. Williams was playing an especially fine game and he came through on two or three occasions in a style that evoked the admiration of all present. Durrant headed on to Kemplay, who tested Bagshaw with a splendid header, the goal-keeper saving nicely. Hewitt was incapacitated for a time by a kick from Mountain. Crump, by the way, was playing in very good style. A couple of free-kicks were awarded against the visitors in rapid succession, but later on they managed to secure a corner. Jenkinson shot in hard, though over the goal. From a beautiful centre by Ekins Hewitt missed. McInnes obtained possession and sent in. It seemed to most of those present that Bagshaw carried the ball into the net, and the customary appeal was made; but the referee did not see his way to granting the point. Mountain, who had been exhibiting some roughness, received a heavy blow in the face from the ball as it skidded off Ekins' toe, whereat there was a deal of laughter—and not much pity for the back. The home outside left just afterwards got clear and centred magnificently and the downfall of the Grimsby goal followed, Durrant equalising with a lovely shot. Play now became fast and furious, the home players exerting themselves strenuously to obtain the advantage. McInnes was struck heavily in the face with the ball, and later on hard pressure by the locals led to some exciting scenes in front of the Grimsby goal. Hewitt was responsible for an especially hard shot, which Bagshaw dealt with cleverly. The custodian about this time, indeed, was about the best man on the side of the "fishermen." The Lutonians were playing with great dash just now. Receiving the best pass of the day from Ekins, Durrant got clear and scored in first-rate style. This was by far the most admirable piece of play of the day, and the spectators did not forget to cheer. The "stripes" were now one ahead, and matters looked promising. Perkins was called upon to clear just after his comrades had secured the lead, and shortly afterwards Kemplay had hard luck close to goal, this being balanced by another narrow escape of scoring on the part of Grimsby. Durrant was badly fouled and so nastily damaged as to have the steam taken out of him for the rest of the game. McInnes broke away splendidly—and shot wide of the mark. Another beauty from Ekins travelled across the goal, while a further good effort produced a corner, following which came another narrow escape of scoring. At the interval Luton continued to hold the lead with the following figures:—

LUTON, 2; GRIMSBY, 1.

Shortly after the resumption, when the strangers had the wind in their favour, Perkins gave a corner, which was not turned to account. The Lutonians paid a visit to the other end and sent wide. Ekins was responsible for a glorious shot which was only just saved and Crump followed up with a beauty from a long range, both having a terrible lot of powder behind them. Hewitt was next to come into evidence with a grand attempt which would have gone into the net had not Kemplay got his head in the way and directed the ball over the bar. Mountain here retired and took no further part in the game. Kemplay broke through and scored a beautiful goal by individual play, though the pass which he received from Durrant was worthy of recognition. McInnes very narrowly missed heading through afterwards. From a centre by Ekins Sharp skimmed the bar by a foot. McInnes was trying very hard indeed to score one "on his own," and just now he landed a good shot in the custodian's hands, while another capital attempt was fisted away. Ekins was nastily fouled, while from a pass by Hewitt the left winger let drive a glorious shot, the best attempt of the day. Hewitt sent through neatly from a centre by Durrant, and Mr. Carpenter appeared to allow the point; but after consulting with one of the linesman the referee disallowed it. This was apparently on the ground of off-side. The absence of the right back was as great a disadvantage to Luton as to Grimsby, for the former were persistently attacking and they were repeatedly put off-side. Grimsby sent through with the same result. A corner forced by Ekins was resultless, and later on the leaders had another narrow miss. C. Ford and one of the Grimsbarians got at loggerheads and the intervention of the referee became necessary. During the last quarter of an hour the visitors improved a good deal. Sharp conceded a corner which was not taken advantage of. Durrant caused Bagshaw to clear from a grand one, and another lovely effort by Ekins was punched away. When Perkins had given another corner, McInnes once more sent over the bar. A corner fell to Luton, and then as the end was drawing near Grimsby failed badly. The outcome was that the locals secured a couple of much-needed League points with the following totals:

LUTON, 3; GRIMSBY, 1.

The *Sporting Life* writes: "It is only fair to the visitors to say that had the score been six to one in their favour it would have more nearly represented the game. The Grimsby goal seemed to be charmed—the ball skimmed the cross-bar or travelled just wide of the posts persistently, many of the shots being tremendously hard. Ekins and Durrant played grandly amongst the home forwards, the former giving one of his best exhibitions, while McInnes worked splendidly. Crump and Ford were prominent at half, Williams was most conspicuous at back, and Perkins saved finely at times. The Grimsby lot gave a fairly good account of themselves, though their display was remarkable rather for dash and vigour than science. They played with great determination and were unlucky not to score once or twice. Inaccurate shooting, indeed, was a very pronounced defect with them. Mr. Carpenter was not a striking success, several of his decisions being distinctly questionable. The success of the home side was received with great enthusiasm in Luton, for the men have been under a cloud recently, and admirers were heartily glad to be able to recognise a return to form, especially in view of the important Cup tie at Tottenham next Saturday. After this victory many are filled with sanguine expectations as to the outcome of the Tottenham test, but it is recognised that to defeat the 'Spurs' on their own ground is a task of extreme difficulty."

FOOTBALL FACTS AND FANCIES.

One's prime note this week must be one of congratulation to the players on a magnificent game against Grimsby. There has been no mid-week match, so that there is no United League defeat to alloy the pleasure.

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I was asked prior to the commencement of the game on Saturday what was likely to be the outcome. What was one to say? Well, my reply was assuredly not favourable to the Luton chances. Accused of pessimism, I pleaded guilty.

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For of a surety the displays during the last few weeks have been anything but consistent. Anyhow, on Saturday the cleverest critics could not have found very glaring faults in the men's show.

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It is curious how many fluctuations there may be in a game of football. Thus, on Saturday the "fishermen" went off in a style that promised well, afterwards in the second half the locals swept all before them, while towards the end the visitors once more made headway.

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It would be idle to suggest that the winners did not deserve their success. They did; for they were by far the better team on the day's play. This may be said without very seriously disparaging the strangers, who played extremely well.

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The fact of the matter was that the Lutonians exhibited such dash and brilliance as I have not witnessed from them for a long time past. Let us hope that the improvement may be continuous and that at Tottenham—but that is another story.

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The Grimsby lot, one ought to say, were at just about full strength, whereas Luton were without Moore and W. Ford. The absence of Moore let in Sharp at centre half.

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What a wonderful difference it makes to a team when one man is at his best! Such was the case with George Ekins on Saturday. He played his finest game of the season, with the result that he was emulated by his comrades.

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George dashed away brilliantly at frequent intervals and his centres were marvellous. It gives me the utmost pleasure to be able to say that two of the goals were secured from his centres.

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Durrant, too, was in great form. The way in which he secured his second goal was a revelation to many. Unfortunately the youngster was damaged a bit, so that he could not do himself justice in the second half. He is verifying my statement that he is worth the watching.

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The veteran McInnes was also going great guns, and wherever there was ticklish work to do there was "Tammy" eager for the fray. The captain tried very hard indeed to notch a goal after the interval, and he came remarkably close more than once, too.

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Kemplay was deserving of commendation, if only for the glorious sample of individual play which led to the scoring of the third goal. It was a very fine achievement. Hewitt was responsible for more than one good exhibition; indeed, it puzzles me to find much weakness in the forward rank.

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Crump was to my mind best of the halves. One shot from his toe was a red-hot one, while he tackled splendidly at other times. Both Sharp and C. Ford, however, were worthy of commendation.

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To say that Williams was the better of the backs need not be construed into any detriment to his partner. Both were in superb fettle, and the Hitchin man gave us the best and most plucky show that I have seen from him up to now.

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Perkins had not very much to do, for the "fishermen" could not shoot. But there were two or three teasers, and the custodian dealt with them admirably. The only shot that beat him was after a goal-kick, and not much importance is to be attached to that.

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Let us spare a few words for Bagshaw. He gave a splendid exhibition, and it was more or less due to him that the score against his side was not very much larger. Everybody greatly admired his work.

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For of a truth the bombardment of the Grimsby goal was very severe. Repeatedly the ball skimmed the bar or missed the post by a foot, and it was only by the most marvellous slice of good fortune that the Grimbarians were not as soundly thrashed as were the Darwenians.

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It was hard luck for the visitors to be deprived of Mountain's services during the second half. But that player had been very reckless, and the game was not far advanced when he managed to lay out Hewitt. This may be construed as justification; but I believe the injury to Mountain was unintentionally inflicted.

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The halves were a fair trio; but the forwards were not very smart, and they neglected opportunities without end. Jenkinson and Griffiths pleased me most.

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What Mr. Carpenter was about when he disallowed Hewitt's goal in the second moiety I cannot imagine. It was as fair a point as could be, and to my mind there was no semblance of off-side about it.

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There was plenty of jubilation after the game, and reasonably so, for few if any expected the locals to emerge successfully from the ordeal. That they did so was creditable, and I award them my meed of praise.

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Other Second League games on Saturday were:—Woolwich Arsenal 5, Newton Heath 1; Gainsborough Trinity 1, Small Heath 1; Leicester Fosse 4, Blackpool 0; Barnsley St. Peter's 1, Walsall 1; Glossop North End 5, Burton Swifts 0; Loughborough 1, Darwen 0; Manchester City 3, Burslem Port Vale 1.

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Of course the attention of all enthusiastic footballers on Saturday will be centred on the great match between Luton and the 'Spurs at Tottenham. The special trains which the Midland Railway are running ought to be well patronised, for the fare is only 2s.



There is sure to be plenty of excitement; there always is when these sides meet. I am told that the 'Spurs do not at all fancy meeting the Lutonians and I can quite believe it, for the "stripes" are as a rule a very hard nut to crack.



The chances? Well, if I could count upon the Lutonians to play such a game as that of Saturday I should not have the slightest fear; but——. Let us hope that the men will rise to the occasion and by qualifying for the competition proper show that the 'Spurs are not such very dreadful beings after all.



The result may be anything. I should not be greatly surprised if the Tottenhamians won easily, for the match is on their pitch; but on the other hand I bear in mind that not for several years had the 'Spurs beaten the Lutonians at Tottenham until this season.

The only thing I have to say to the Luton men is to infuse plenty of dash into their game—and to keep their heads on. If George Ekins and one or two more are only in form I shall not fear, for the rest may be counted upon to rise to the occasion.

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Until Saturday I was very despondent; but now I really am entertaining the thought that we, after all, have a chance of winning. That my thought may be borne out by the result is my devout wish.

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It will be no disgrace to the Lutonians to lose; but, on the other hand, it would be an immense honour to them to win. I see "Rover" does not fancy the chances of the Lutonians, and that sort of gives me heart of grace.

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On Monday the Reading players are due at Luton in a United League encounter. The home lot ought to win—but will they?

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I understand that the Luton team to play at Tottenham is likely to be constituted similarly to that of Saturday last. Should W. G. Ford be sufficiently recovered he will appear at centre half in lieu of Sharp.

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I regret to learn that McInnes has suffered a bereavement this week in the death of his mother. He has been North in order to attend the funeral, which took place on Wednesday.

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A good deal has been heard during the last few days concerning probable new players. I am informed that negotiations have been proceeding with a centre forward; but at the time of writing the parties had not come to terms. The man is Mullen, of St. Mirrens, who is described as a player of the Donaldson type. We could do with some of the vigorous Donaldsonian methods just now.

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The following clipping from the *Sporting Life* will interest readers: "We understand that Tottenham Hotspur are trying to induce G. P. Wilson to play for them in their Cup games, and it is also rumoured that another well-known amateur has half signified his intention of taking sides with them. If it is correct the 'Spurs will certainly be lucky." I wonder who is the other "well-known amateur." G. O. Smith would not be a bad catch.

FOOTER.