

THE LEAGUE.—DIVISION II.

WALSALL v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Walsall on Saturday. Result:—

Walsall..... 6 goals.

Luton Town..... nil.

The teams were:—

Luton.—Perkins; Dow and Williams; Ford, Sharp, and Crump; Brook, McInnes, Kemplay, Birch, and Durrant.

Walsall. — Tennant; Peers and Davies; Holmes, Jenkins, and Taggart; Dean, Aston, Vail, Martin, and Griffin.

Referee, Mr. T. Helme, of Farnworth.

Under any circumstances, there never would have been much chance of Luton winning at Walsall, where last year's team dropped no less than five goals, but after the Brighton result, the most optimistic of local supporters scarcely looked for any other result than a severe thrashing. And that drubbing was duly administered to the extent of a round half-dozen goals, though, as at Brighton, the state of the game was not at all what might be inferred from the state of the poll.

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Cigarette Smokers.—Ask your tobacconist for Sweet May Cigarettes, 7d. per oz. Guaranteed best in the market. Wholesale only of E. Gibbs, Upper George-street, Luton.—[ADVT.]

At the Queen of Watering-places, Luton had by far the best of the play in the first half, and then had the heart taken out of them by a goal scored by the Brightonians from a break-away just before the interval. History did not exactly repeat itself on Saturday, as the Saddlers were undoubtedly the better team, in the second moiety at any rate, but in the first half there was precious little in it. The two penalties alone gave Walsall a distinct advantage, and the Luton players were anything but satisfied with the manner in which those penalties were given.

The first occurred before the game was five minutes' old. After Taggart had got in a good shot, Vail was making a run for goal, when Williams put his foot in front and blocked the ball. Vail unfortunately went over, and the referee promptly awarded a penalty, which Dean turned to account, to the no small delight of the three thousand spectators who lined the ropes. With a goal to their credit thus early in the game, the home team were naturally very much encouraged, and the forwards made several good runs, Perkins and the Luton backs as a consequence having a pretty warm time of it.

Luton retaliated, but were repulsed, and Griffin got the ball, and took it trickily along the left, but being hard pressed, transferred to Dean on the extreme right, the latter passing to Aston, who tested Perkins with a capital shot at long range. Again Luton attacked, only to be driven back, and re-attacking, their chances were spoilt by Taggart, who relieved at a moment when the visitors were going well for goal. Caesar, at the other end, now had a shy at goal, but Perkins threw away. An exceptionally smart attack on the visitors' goal followed, and Perkins came out grandly, getting several shots away in fine style. True, he was floored, but he saved his charge intact, and came up smiling.

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After this, play was transferred to the other end, where Tennant was kept well on the alert, and Durrant got in a very deadly shot, but the custodian was equal to the occasion. Then Dean made a splendid run, and handing on the ball to Aston, that player succeeded in beating Perkins and increasing Walsall's lead to two goals. There it would have stopped until the interval, but for that other penalty, which was given against Crump for handling, though the handling was quite accidental. Indeed, the ball struck him from behind, and the referee consulted the linesmen before awarding a penalty. Dean again took the kick, and again scored, Walsall thus crossing over with a lead of three goals to nil.

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The second half opened in Walsall's favour, but Luton plucked up courage and forced a corner, and McInnes obtaining possession, put in a fine shot, which Tennant cleverly saved. After several vain attempts by Walsall to get away, Birch took advantage of an opening, and was getting dangerously near goal when Holmes and Peers rushed in and averted the danger. Walsall then made the running, and a couple of corners fell to them, from the second of which Vail headed into the net.

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The Saddlers subsequently put on very severe pressure, their forwards showing exceptionally fine form, and after Perkins had saved many shots of all descriptions, he had the misfortune to strike the ball against the under side of the cross-bar, and Martin being up, easily put on a fifth goal, whilst a little later Vail added a sixth.

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Notwithstanding their many reverses, Luton played up very pluckily, and had extremely hard lines in having disallowed a goal which McInnes and Durrant had been instrumental in getting. It was in this wise. The forwards were making a good run, and McInnes getting hold of the leather, put in a splendid shot, which struck the upright and rebounded into play, Durrant rushing up and putting on the finishing touch. It was disallowed for offside against Durrant. Another goal obtained by Luton was also disallowed, when McInnes converted a centre by Brock, on the ground that the ball had gone over the touch-line before Brock middled. This, the Luton players say positively was not the case, and altogether they feel that the referee's decisions were very hard upon them, both in regard to the penalties and the goals disallowed.

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The "Midland Evening News" on Saturday night, had the following comments on the game:

"Walsall had an opportunity to-day of avenging their defeat earlier in the season by the men of Luton. It will be remembered that when the team met in the first match, Luton plucked the match as a brand from the burning at the last moment, running out winners by 3-2. In the return game to-day, the Saddlers had an opportunity of wiping off old scores against the Straw-plaiters, and the start of the game looked very promising for Walsall, for in the first five minutes Dean scored from a penalty kick. Considering the somewhat heavy nature of the ground, the play was good and fast, Walsall having most of the game, although playing up the slope in the first half. Some good runs were made on the Walsall left, although the right wing was the more conspicuous for individual dashes. Ten minutes or so before the interval a pretty bit of play by Dean gave Aston his opportunity, and he notched number two for Walsall. A minute later, a slice of luck fell to the Saddlers in the shape of a second penalty-kick, from which Dean put the ball into the net, giving Walsall a lead of three goals to nothing, which was the score when the teams crossed over.

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"At centre, Caesar Jonkyns, who was perhaps about the best player on the field in the Woolwich match last Saturday, was again conspicuous with head and feet, and put in some serviceable work. Davies gave a capital exposition at left back. Amongst the visitors, Dow, the right back, and Ford, the right half-back, were the shining lights. Perkins, between the sticks for Luton, also gave a capital display. He is quick and alert, and nothing goes by him by default. Vail, twenty minutes after the resumption of play, headed into the net from a corner by Dean, giving the Saddlers a quartette of goals to nil. Play became somewhat exciting, and Walsall sent in a perfect shower of shots. However, they could not disturb the rigging owing to the superb display of Perkins, who, spry as a weasel, kicked and punched and threw away in the liveliest manner. Walsall kept the pressure up, and at last it told, Martin putting on a finishing touch after Perkins had knocked the ball against the inside of the bar. A lead of five—nothing looked more hopeless, but Luton played up pluckily, and the home spectators sang to the praise of Perkins. The Saddlers went all the way to-day."

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