

SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SMALL HEATH.

ANOTHER DEFEAT.

Luton's position in the Second League was too bad to be improved by victory on Saturday against Small Heath, but the Birmingham team were very anxious to win, as they have every chance of securing second place and the hope of promotion to the First League. The afternoon was beautifully fine, and the warm sunshine tempted many of the Club's usual supporters to go out cycling. Hence, the "gate" was really disheartening for such an important match, not more than 1,600 being present. Mr. Walford, the referee, had the teams out as follows:—

Luton: Perkins; Dow and Williams; C. Ford, Sharp, and Crump; Brock, McInnes, Kempley, Birch and W. Ford.

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

The visitors kicked off in face of brilliant sunshine, and attacked at once, but Williams did good work in defence. Hewitt twisted his knee as soon as he got on the field, and had to retire. Luton thus only had ten men for a few minutes, until W. Ford came out in his place. Play was fast and interesting, both sides working hard. Luton got dangerous twice, Kempley just missing the mark with a hot shot. Brock only failed to "bustle" Clutterbuck through his goal by the merest chance, the Birmingham custodian having to be very smart to clear.

The home team certainly ought to have scored. Small Heath then had their turn. Bennett shot in, but Perkins got the ball away in marvellous fashion, when prostrate in goal. The visitors appealed for a score, but the referee, on consulting the linesmen, decided that the ball had not crossed the line. Some 22 minutes passed before the Heathens took the first corner of the game, but the ball was placed over the bar. Perkins clung to the cross-bar to save a high shot from Bennett, and cleared brilliantly from Wilcox. After 25 minutes, "hands" were awarded against McInnes; the ball was beautifully placed and headed through by Abbott, Perkins running out, but missing the ball completely. A minute later Small Heath pressed again, and from Perkins' return, Abbott smartly scored No. 2.

After 35 minutes, McInnes was fooled by Archer close to goal. It was not a serious affair, but after consulting both linesmen, Mr. Walford awarded a penalty, from which Dow scored. Directly afterwards, Dow sent in a magnificent shot, which Clutterbuck only just saved. Luton now "backed up" wonderfully, and the spectators manifested great enthusiasm, as the home forwards made repeated onslaughts.

Clutterbuck kicked out from Brock, and a corner was badly placed by W. Ford. Half-time score:—

SMALL HEATH	...	...	2
LUTON	...	...	1

Rebounding, Luton worked splendidly to equalise, and from a grand centre by Kempley, Brock sent the ball through, just as the whistle sounded "Goal." W. Ford put in a sweeping shot from his wing, which Clutterbuck only just got away, and Brock gave him a beauty to save directly afterwards. At the other end, Perkins evoked loud applause by clearing from Abbott. In a rush by the Luton forwards, "hands" were awarded close to Clutterbuck, but Crump placed the ball into the net untouched. A minute later, Pratt again handled, and from Dow's place-kick a ferocious bully took place in the Small Heath goal. Amid great excitement, W. Ford was seen to dash up and shove, Clutterbuck being buried beneath a heap of struggling players, and getting hurt in the scrimmage.

A huge demonstration was made, when Luton scored the equalising goal. Only 5 minutes later, following a foul on Wharton, one of the Luton defenders kicked the ball away and Abbott scored No. 3 from the penalty. Wharton made a rush for Perkins, but only damaged his knee against the post, the home keeper being awarded a free-kick. Birch made a single-handed run, but the ball went wide. In the last 10 minutes, Luton forced three corners in succession, and Brock was badly fouled close to the corner-flag. Mr. Walford, however, refused to allow a penalty, and only threw the ball up. The Birmingham defence was sorely pressed, but Luton's attack died away before the finish arrived with the score:—

SMALL HEATH	...	...	3
LUTON	...	...	2

Football Notes.

The Birmingham men did not come to Luton on Saturday with much confidence, because they have a poor record for matches away from home and on the previous Wednesday had only made a draw at Blackpool. However, they just got home after some unfortunate experiences for Luton, who had worse luck than usual. On the hard ground, the play raged fast and the Luton men were in smart trim. Unhappily, Hewitt only came on the field a minute before the start, when his knee gave way, and the locals had to rely on W. Ford, who was still handicapped by his injury.

The fault lay mainly in want of cohesion in the forward line, where McIntosh worked desperately hard to pull his men together. Charlie Ford was most noticeable among the halves, but the brunt of the defence fell upon Dow and Williams, who were both in splendid form. It was rather curious that the referee awarded two penalties for comparatively slight infringements but failed to punish in a similar way the most serious foul of the day.

Small Heath certainly disappointed the high expectations formed of them. They play a hard game but did not show much science in front of goal. McRoberts, their well-known centre forward, broke his collar-bone in the English Cup match with Stoke and has been out of the team since then, but is expected to be well enough to play against Leicester Fosse to-morrow. Seven of the team on Saturday were local men, and at Small Heath, the club can always rely on the support of a 5,000 crowd.