



SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BLACKPOOL.

A BARE VICTORY.

Blackpool have done some wretched performances this season, and on Saturday's form at Luton there is not much hope for them of rising above the last three clubs in the League. Not more than 800 spectators were present, and the bitterly cold afternoon, with driving snow and rain, made the game a very cheerless affair altogether. The home team suffered by the absence of McInnes in the front rank, while Blackpool were short of four first eleven men, viz., Stuart, Atherton, Parr and Williams, who got various injuries in the drawn game with Woolwich Arsenal at Blackpool on the previous Wednesday. The teams were as follows:

Luton: Perkins; Dow and Williams; C. Ford, Ralley, and Crump; Brock, W. Ford, Kemplay, Birch and Durrant.

Blackpool: Fletcher; Stirzaker and Scott; Wallace, Parkinson, and Howson; Eaves, Cartmell, Birkett, Leadbetter and Hoyle.

The referee was Mr. Wells, of Plumstead.

Losing the toss, Luton had to start against a gusty wind but within 8 minutes, the ball was rushed into the net by Kemplay and Brock but a score was disallowed owing to Fletcher's being fouled. The home team did some steady pressure and the tall Blackpool goal-keeper showed he was made of sterling stuff. A really good attempt by Ralley went just wide, and Crump sending up, Durrant forced a corner. Following some scrambling play in front of the Luton goal, Hoyle surprised Perkins with a long high shot and registered the first goal, which looked suspiciously offside, after 33 minutes' play. This woke up Luton and the visitors' custodian saved cleverly twice in succession, also clearing as Kemplay floored him unceremoniously in the net. At half-time, the score was:

BLACKPOOL...	...	...	1
LUTON...	...	...	0

Resuming, the visitors seemed likely to maintain their lead, as they put in a lot of stubborn defence against Luton's very random and disjointed methods. However, after 20 minutes had passed, Dow placed a free-kick with good judgment and from W. Ford's pass, Brock equalised. The referee cautioned Birch and some of the spectators. A corner fell to Luton and Fletcher saved well from W. Ford when prostrate in his goal. Birch scored an offside point and then, 12 minutes before the finish, Ralley initiated the first bit of good combination in the Luton team, a pass from Birch enabling Kemplay to run clean through and score No. 2. This elicited the first round of hearty applause during the afternoon. Just 5 minutes before the end, W. Ford put on No. 3 with a long shot into the top of the net. Everyone thought the game was over, when the Blackpool right wing broke away and Perkins, apparently confident that the referee's whistle would be blown for offside, allowed the ball to be headed through. Mr. Wells gave a goal, and Luton thus won by the same score as in Lancashire:—

LUTON...	...	...	3
BLACKPOOL...	...	...	2

NOTES.

The football was very poor on both sides and Luton ought to have defeated such a weak team by half-a-dozen goals, if they had showed any combined dash in front of the Blackpool net. Kemplay often seemed eclipsed for 10 or 15 minutes at a time, while Ford and Brock did not appear to be on amiable terms. Durrant finished everything lamely, and lacked spirit and pluck. The halves were moderate, though Ralley showed up best in useful work. The rest of the team did nothing brilliant.

Blackpool's best performance away from home has been a draw at Lincoln, and they were very near accomplishing the same thing at Luton. The sea-siders have only won 5 out of 28 matches, while Luton claim 8 victories against 16 lost and 2 drawn games. Their goal-keeper was the best man in the team, Parkinson at centre-half and Birkett at centre-forward being also noticeable. Luton's record in the Second League for 18 points is 43 to 74. It is rather strange that Gainsborough and Blackpool are the only two Second League clubs who have yielded 4 points to Luton this season, we lost by 1-0 at Blackpool last year winning here by 3-1, and drew at Gainsborough