

THE LEAGUE.—DIVISION II.

LUTON TOWN v. LINCOLN CITY.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Lincoln City	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Farr; Dow and Williams; Birch, Bailey and Crump; Brock, McInnes, Kemplay, W. Ford and Ekins.

Lincoln: Bissett; Schofield and Gibson; Smith, Morris and Gray; Fern, Henderson, Robertson, Clark and Pyle.

Referee, Mr. J. Wells (Plumstead); linesmen, Messrs. A. G. Hines and E. A. Marson.

Not often, with football, is it that the best is reserved until last, but certainly the last of the English League matches played on the Bury Park enclosure this season was about the most enjoyable of the whole series. The weather was bright, the football was as bright as the weather, and the two thousand odd spectators were on excellent terms with themselves all the way through, albeit the scoring was not quite so rapid as they would have liked, or as the efforts of the Luton men deserved.

Sweet May Cigarettes, 7d. per oz., now the popular smoke; increasing sales weekly. None are better. Sold by all tobacconists. Wholesale of E. Gibbs, 19, Upper George-street, Luton.—[ADVT.]

If the Luton players had given us many such exhibitions as we had on Saturday there would not have been much grumbling, and very little reason to complain of diminished support. At least, that is my impression. From the very start there was a liveliness and determination about their work which augured well for success, and they kept pegging away in face of disappointments which on many occasions would have brought about speedy disorganisation.

Luton won the toss, but there was very little in it, there being scarcely any wind. Play opened very fast, the visitors showing a good deal of smartness and an evident desire to get in the vicinity of the Luton goal. But the first thing of note was a brilliant run by Ekins—quite one of the old sort—and it was George's misfortune and not his fault that the ball went a little too far and over the line. A good return by Dow next gave Kemplay an opportunity which was not taken.

Then came one of the disappointments to which I have alluded. Luton going away on the left, Ekins passed to Ford, who put in the mouth of goal, and McInnes rushing in, was unlucky enough to scoop the ball right over the bar. Luton continued to press for a time without result, and then Lincoln getting away, Farr was afforded his first chance by a header from Clark, followed by a shot from Henderson. The local lad exhibited coolness and judgment, and cleared in capital style. The visitors soon afterwards forced a corner, and a little later Henderson, receiving from a throw-in, put in a clinking shot, which was splendidly negotiated by Farr.

A couple of fouls against Lincoln placed their goal in danger, and eventually a good centre by Brock resulted in a corner. This was well placed, and led to disappointment number two, Ford hitting the bar with a rattling shot, and Luton then failing to get through from the scrimmage which ensued. Bissett having saved a beauty from Birch, the City cleared from a free kick and Clark made tracks for the other end. Williams stepped in, but Robertson rushed away with the ball, only to find himself overtaken at the critical moment by Dow, who was loudly applauded for his effort.

Luton now made a vigorous response, and after a bit Brock forced and placed a corner. The ball found its way through a crowd of players to the foot of Ford, who made no mistake, scoring a fine goal. This was immediately before the interval, and came just in time to give the homesters the encouragement they so well deserved. It certainly seemed to have its effect, for Luton opened the second half in brilliant style, and soon forced a couple of corners, from the second of which McInnes hit the bar with a beautiful shot.

Another corner followed, but this, like one later on, was ruled to have gone behind by the referee, though the ball actually dropped in front of goal. Luton returning to the attack, Ekins received, and beating Schofield, put in a lovely low shot, which Bissett had the hardest work in the world to save. From a foul throw-in by Crump, Lincoln got down, and Farr saved well from a header at close quarters.

The ball was speedily trundled up the field again, and there were loud cries for penalties on two occasions when the backs appeared to deliberately handle the ball. The penalties were not awarded, and the remarks which followed from the terraces led to the referee interviewing some of the spectators who were standing there. The play continued all in Luton's favour, but well-directed as their efforts were, it was close on time before the second goal came, Ralley then sending to the front, Schofield missing, and McInnes rushing in and scoring with a nice shot.

Had Luton won by half-a-dozen goals, the score would have afforded a much better indication of the merits of the teams. And yet Lincoln did not play at all badly. For the greater part of the game they performed smartly, and seemed alive to every move on the board, but they were quite eclipsed by Luton, who have seldom played a better game. There was only one weak man in the team, and that I am sorry to say was Komplay. I am sorry, because no one tries harder than he does, but ill-luck seems to dog his steps. He made several good passes out to Ekins, but for the most part his efforts were not successful.

Ekins was in something like his old form and played a fine game, whilst W. Ford was seen to much better advantage than he had been of late. McInnes worked untiringly, and showed good judgment in acting on the defensive towards the finish. Of Brock, it need only be said that he was at his best, and neither he nor Ekins could have been improved upon in their respective positions.

tions.

The halves also showed up very creditably. Crump playing a dashing game, Birch plodding on in very effective fashion, and Ralley performing as smartly as he usually does. The local lad only wants the coaching which I hope he will get next season to make him a first-class half. Both backs gave a splendid account of themselves. Perhaps, taken on the whole, Dow was a little safer than Williams, but there was not much to choose between them.

As to Farr, he fully justified the opinion I formed of his abilities when I saw him in the practice matches at the beginning of the season, and it always seemed a pity to me that he was not given opportunities as an understudy to Perkins. His exhibition on Saturday would have been no discredit to a thoroughly experienced custodian, and seeing the little practice he has had, it was really astonishing that he acquitted himself so well. He did not have a great deal to do, but some of the shots sent in were difficult ones, and he negotiated them in the most approved style.

The refereeing was not of the best. I am not sure as to those penalties which were claimed, but I am sure that afterwards several decisions were given in Luton's favour which ought to have been the other way about.

Spend your money to the best advantage, by purchasing your boots and shoes at Freeman, Hardy and Willis, 38, George-street, Luton, the largest boot retailers in the kingdom. New goods for present season. See windows and compare prices.—[ADVT.]

The Luton directors apparently derived so much encouragement from their Town Hall meeting last Thursday, that they felt justified in inserting an advertisement in Monday's "Athletic News," stating that they were "open to receive applications for next season for all positions," and that applicants were to give particulars as to "age, height, and previous engagements." Now I sincerely hope the directors will do nothing rash, but that what money they spend will be bestowed on really class men.

It would be the easiest thing in the world to fill up the ranks with "old crocks" or men of doubtful capacity, and what is chiefly wanted at this time is discrimination. Luton cannot go into the open market and compete with Clubs which are more favourably situated, and judgment and judgment alone will help them to a team which can be depended upon to achieve a good position next season. Money is not everything, as the Tottenham Hotspur officials know by this time.

My contention all along has been that it would be infinitely better to concentrate attention on filling two or three of the principal positions with thoroughly good men rather than to go in for a dozen players of average, or less than average, ability. My contention was strengthened by the excellent display given by Farr on Saturday, showing, as it did, that the directors were unwise in running all over the place after a custodian when they had got a good one to hand. The regrettable thing is that Farr was not given many more trials earlier on.

Then, although Crump and Birch admittedly played a good game against Lincoln, Ralley was every bit as good as either, and what Ralley wants now is someone to bring him out. Put him with men of only average capacity, and he will probably keep on their level, but give him a capable coach, and he ought to make one of the best of halves. I am certain that there is a lot of local talent, and the pity of it is that it has not had more opportunities of development.

However generous the response to the appeals now being made may be, I sincerely hope the directors will not be tempted to incur liabilities which experience shows are too great for a town of Luton's size. Economy should be the watch-word, and that economy is only to be attained by the combination of local and the very best outside talent.

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Perkins is said to be worming himself into the confidence of the supporters of the Liverpool Club. "Cool and clever" is the description of his work on Saturday, when Liverpool defeated Blackburn Rovers by two goals to nil.