

SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON LOSERS AT BIRMINGHAM.

SMALL HEATH SCORE TWO DOUBTFUL GOALS AND WIN BY 3-0.

With Morrison absent and the forward rank once more re-arranged, Luton did not travel to Small Heath on Saturday with bright hopes. The weather was fine, but the ground hard and slippery, the Luton players, as at Kensal-rise, seeming unable to keep their foothold. The game was a mixture of football and sliding, with bumps and tumbles thrown in. At no stage of the game did the teams play anything but moderate football. There was an occasional flash of fine work, but the effort was seldom sustained. Small Heath got through three times.

THEY WERE DECIDEDLY LUCKY

in doing so. The first time they did it the referee put on a bewildered look, indicated an infringement of the offside rule, and concluded by allowing a goal. It was a masterly piece of indecisiveness. Wharton was given a chance of centring from the line, and he landed the ball right into the mouth of goal, where Bennett was almost huddling Daw. He breasted the ball into the net, and it was an open question whether Bennett did not deserve penalising. An appeal prompted the referee to point to the spot where Bennett had stood. Everyone expected the kick to be taken for offside, but suddenly the referee pointed to the centre of the field, and there the ball had to be placed in spite of protests. A rough-and-tumble, scrambling contest proceeded on its way until a few minutes from the interval without little of note happening. Luton, however, were the weaker team. The absence of Williams and Morrison upset the effectiveness of the half-back line. Brock and Ralley did their level best, but their best was not good enough to hold the Small Heath wings in check, and at the same time they failed to give proper support to the forwards. The half-way stage had nearly been reached when Leake and Bennett assisted in breasting the ball into goal. Daw prevented it passing him, but the home side claimed that the ball was over the line, and the referee upheld the contention. Thus a

SECOND PROBLEMATIC POINT

went down to the credit of the Brums. The second half opened in a manner which made the home folk stare. Luton got into their stride, and so well sustained were their efforts that the forwards found it advisable to fall back and assist. In spite of a reinforced defence, however, the visitors kept up a veritable bombardment of the home goal. Every forward had a try at goal, and thrice in as many seconds Robinson dealt with capital shots.

A HOT FIFTEEN MINUTES.

For fully 15 minutes the home goal was never out of difficulties, but in the end the defence prevailed, and the contest took a more open turn. In this half, Luton had quite as much of the play as their opponents, but the shooting was far from good. Marshall played a useful game in the open, but he has not enough dash in close quarters to make a capable centre-forward. The wings played cleverly, but many opportunities they made were missed by bad shooting. Dow and M'Curdy behaved admirably at back, and Daw was in no way to blame for the shots that were registered against him. The third came from Scriven in close quarters, and Daw had not the slightest chance of dealing with it. The Coventry-road men gave an indifferent display, but they were not fully represented, and this circumstance accounted for many of the disjointed attacks. Result:

SMALL HEATH 3, LUTON 0.

Teams:

Small Heath: Robinson; Archer and Lester; Adey, Leake, and Farnall; Leonard, Bennett, Scriven, Main and Wharton.

Luton: Daw; Dow and M'Curdy; Brock, Stewart, and Ralley; Fairgrieve, McInnes, Brown, Marshall and Eckford.