



SECOND LEAGUE.

LUTON v. LEICESTER FOSSE.

A CREDITABLE DRAW.

Luton were the visitors to the Fosse ground on Saturday, and were able to bring a fairly representative eleven, Holdstock, for Brown, at half-back, being the only alteration, as compared with the team which defeated Barnsley at Luton the previous Saturday. Fosse were unfortunately unable to command full strength, Dainty and Galbraith being on the injured list. The teams were:

Fosse: Beardsley; Wragg and Swift; Ball, Robinson, and Jones; Bradshaw, Brown, King, McMillan and Allen.

Luton: Daw; Dow and McCurdy; Barnes, Holdstock, and Williams; Brock, McInnes, Draper, Eckford and Dimmock.

Referee: Mr. F. Beardsley, Woolwich.

The ground was exceedingly heavy after the recent rain, and sand had been liberally distributed over the softer portions. There was no sun, but a breeze was blowing. Fosse won the toss, and decided to defend the Aylestone goal.

The crowd numbered about 3,000. The Luton forwards did not hesitate to shoot, and put in some good attempts at the start, while Dow shone in defence. Some 20 minutes had passed before the Fosse scored, Allen sending through from a corner. However, 2 minutes later, Draper beat Wragg and equalised by a dashing bit of play.

The fact that Luton had equalised had an evident good moral effect, and their left flank came on vigorously. Dimmock centred nicely, and Beardsley had to run out to clear. Owing, however, to the quagmire, Beardsley could not lift the ball away, and a second goal for the visitors seemed imminent, but McInnes, who appeared to have the goal at his mercy, could not lift the ball for a similar reason, and then Robinson bounded in, and saved at the expense of a corner, which yielded nothing. Fosse forwards, who were keeping their places much better than usual, then got away, and close in McMillan put on the 2nd goal with a finished shot. At half-time the score was:

LEICESTER 2, LUTON 1.

The second half had an unexpected opening. Two minutes from the restart, the Luton men attacked briskly, and Brock centred. Beardsley saved, but in disposing of the leather it rebounded from Draper, who was following up, and went through the goal, the Luton team thus equalising. Fosse strove hard to again get the lead, and from a free-kick Swift did put through, but no second player had touched. The gate at this time was about 6,000. Dow, the right back, was doing excellent work for Luton. In spite of trying hard, it still looked as if it was going to be a difficult matter for Fosse to forge ahead, for the Luton halves would not budge an inch, and the backs were very safe. Moreover, the visiting forwards had gained confidence by their success, and possibly were encouraged by the fact that the previous League games were all drawn.

The Fosse forwards found a plucky defence opposed to them. Though Dow once missed his kick in front of goal, Daw splendidly came to the rescue. Eventually, Luton assumed the offensive, and Brock put through, but the referee, after consulting one linesman, disallowed the point as offside. Luton were now playing up brilliantly, and it was evident that in the remaining quarter of an hour Fosse would have to make no mistakes, or else the first defeat on their own ground for a couple of seasons might be their portion. Wragg went amongst the home forwards, and the last 10 minutes were desperately waged.

Some severe pressure by the Leicester forwards was beaten back, and Dow once kicked the ball clean out of the field. Daw saved magnificently a hard shot from Bradshaw. Then a very anxious moment for Leicester followed. Dimmock beat Swift, and centred to Eckford, and the latter had only Beardsley to beat. The Fosse goalkeeper, without a moment's hesitation, ran out of goal, pounced on the leather, and took it clean from Eckford's foot before the Luton man had fairly made up his mind what to do. The last ten minutes seemed more like a whole half. Fosse got the ball back to midfield, when the whistle blew with the score:—

LUTON 2, LEICESTER 2.

NOTES.

The result of Luton's visit to Leicester was highly creditable to the team and the news was received with great satisfaction on Saturday night. It is curious to note that our last 6 meetings with the Fosse have ended in 4 draws:—

Sept. 4, 1897, at Leicester, draw, 1—1.

April 8, 1898, at Luton, Fosse 1, Luton 0.

Sept. 17, 1898, at Leicester, draw 1—1.

Jan. 14, 1899, at Luton, Fosse 6, Luton 1.

Sept. 23, 1899, at Luton, draw 0—0.

January 20, 1900, at Leicester, draw, 2—2.

As will be seen above, Luton only missed winning in the last 2 minutes.

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After speaking of the disappointing draw, a Leicester writer says:—"But the fact remains that the Bedfordshire men played a fine fighting game, and their form utterly belied their lowly position in the League. On a dry ground a different result might have ensued, but the heavy, sticky going seemed to suit Luton to a nicety, and their backs, with the exception of making one or two miskicks, of which advantage was not taken, did wonderfully well. Strictly speaking, Fosse had more of the game than had Luton, but the latter were so dangerous at times as to incline one to say that the result was a very fair reflex of what took place. The usual "near thing" was experienced by both sides, but perhaps the ripest opportunity was missed by a Luton forward (McInnes) when Beardsley was for the moment unable to shift the ball out of a greasy spot.

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The Luton forwards were, on the play, quite on a par with the home lot. One cannot withhold admiration for the pluck and go of a team which, after being led on two occasions, yet each time managed to get on level terms. Fosse started well, but the Luton defenders—especially Dow—were real workers. For a period the Luton forwards fell off, though once they equalised they showed up better than ever. The last quarter of an hour was a great struggle. On the one side you had Fosse working like Trojans to get that precious goal which would win them the match; on the other side, Luton seemed to be saying just as determinedly, 'No, you shan't.'

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The old Rushden man, Daw, in the Luton goal, was very smart, especially in the last quarter. Dow played a great game at full-back, and McCurdy was a most useful partner; the halves were three robust men, Williams on the left being the pick; and forward the work of McInnes and Draper continually caught the eye. Luton have now made a draw in all their three League games at Leicester."