

The League.—Division II.

LUTON TOWN v. GAINSBOROUGH.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town	4 goals.
Gainsborough Trinity.....	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Daw; Dow and McCurdy; Williams, Holdstock, and J. Brown; W. Brown, Brook, Draper, Dimmock, and Eckford.

Gainsborough—Bagshaw; Pycock and Brannon; Hall, Thornley, and Harrison; Haigh, Johnson, Vail, Radford, and Fenton.

Referee, Mr. F. W. Beardsley (Plumstead); Linesmen, Messrs. Peters (Kettering), and S. R. Carr (London).

Delightful weather favoured this fixture on Saturday, and the fifteen hundred spectators who assembled on the Bury Park enclosure had every reason to congratulate themselves both as to the match and as to the conditions under which it was played. People who were wont to patronise the Luton Club, but who now unfortunately take themselves and their money elsewhere, would probably require a deal of convincing that good football is still to be seen on the ground where so many ding-dong games have been played, but I can vouch for the excellent quality of the play nevertheless.

I have seen matches in which there has been more excitement, chiefly because there have been more spectators, but it is many a long day since I saw a better and brighter display than was furnished on Saturday. Gainsborough, fresh from their three-goal-to-nil victory over Leicester Fosse, played with courage and determination, and were smart and clever into the bargain, but they were surpassed by the homesters, who gave a splendid account of themselves, excelling in almost every department.

Apart altogether from monetary considerations, the very best thing done by the directors this season was when they got rid of half their highly-paid pros. The men they retained are grand workers and a credit to themselves and the Club, and the local players who have been put in to fill the vacancies are performing in really marvellous fashion. It was quite a pleasure to watch the team on Saturday, for every man was a genuine trier, and their exhibition altogether was far and away in front of many that I have seen even in Luton's palmiest days.

Gainsborough won the toss, and were the first to get away. Fenton sending in a beautiful shot from the touch-line, but Daw negotiated this in taking style, and was equally smart in dealing with two or three others that followed. Then Luton attacked vigorously, Brook and Eckford being prominent, and a well-placed corner by Rowland Brown almost led to the downfall of the Gainsborough citadel. Holdstock sent in a hard shot, which rebounded off one of the players, and a dropping one from Draper would in all probability have been turned to account had not a foul been given for impeding the custodian.

The Trinitarians created a bit of excitement at the other end, where High shot over the bar, and Luton again replying, Holdstock and J. Brown were responsible for good attempts. Eckford next secured and placed a corner, and two or three likely-looking shots resulted. The visitors, however, succeeded in clearing, but only for a moment, Eckford making a brilliant run, and after surviving a foul, to which the linesman vainly endeavoured to call the referee's attention, put in a lovely centre, which Dimmock had no difficulty in converting.

This was something to go on with, and a few minutes later the spectators were put in an even more jubilant frame of mind. Holdstock hoarding a splendid goal from a corner by Brown. Although the visitors made desperate efforts to get on better terms, Luton continued pressing, and a goal seemed certain when Draper got clean through the defence, but unfortunately Brock, in the excitement of the moment, stepped in and took the shot, which went high over the bar. The custodian shortly afterwards did let the ball go into the net, failing in an attempt to fist away, but Referee Beardsley ruled that he had been impeded, and so the goal was disallowed.

Gainsborough started the second half with an evident determination to improve their position, and they very nearly succeeded, Haigh swinging the ball across the mouth of goal, and Radford, after Daw had unsuccessfully endeavoured to clear, banging it against the post. This was a bit of hard luck for the visitors, and after Brock had made a grand run on the wing and just missed the mark with a fast shot, they returned to the attack and tested Daw once or twice.

Play was soon transferred to Gainsborough territory, however, and Luton had a couple of corners. The first of these Roland Brown placed behind, but the second was judged to such a nicety that Draper was able to head it through. Luton had thus gained a lead of three goals to nil, and a few minutes later Draper netted the ball again, but Eckford, from whom he received his pass, was given offside.

After this Gainsborough gave another of their troublesome turns, but Daw effected a couple of fine saves, and Luton again took up the running. From now to the close the homesters were continuously pressing, and just before the finish Brock succeeded in scoring the fourth goal.

Still, though the Trinitarians were so well beaten, they showed very smart form, from beginning to end, and the game was never of a one-sided character. Luton's victory was all the more praiseworthy, from the fact that it was gained over opponents who not only knew how to play, but did play for all they were worth.

On Saturday's form, the homesters were a clever and well-balanced lot, and there was not a weak spot in the team. Daw was everything that could be desired in goal, and the two backs were in fine fettle, being ready to undertake any amount of work, and seldom or never making a mistake. All three half-backs were strong. Holdstock was very successful at centre half, and his two comrades played a clinking game.

In the case of the forwards, it is just as hard to pick out any for special mention, because they all did so well. Eckford and Brock were both in tip-top form. Draper, who left for the Cape yesterday (Wednesday) played a wonderfully-improved game at centre, and Brown was a bigger handful than either Harrison or Brannen could properly cope with. The Reserve also performed very creditably. McInnes, it should be stated, had to stand out of the team on account of an injured foot.

Woolwich Arsenal played a good game at Plumstead, and beat Newton Heath by two goals to one. Bolton Wanderers, to whom Luton will have to pay a visit on Saturday, drew at Leicester, there being no score, and Loughborough, who will be Luton's guests the following week, went under at Barnsley to the tune of 7 goals to nil, whilst on Monday they were beaten by the Arsenal by a round dozen goals. The following is the League table up to date:—

Goals.