

The League. = Division II.

LUTON TOWN v. SMALL HEATH.

Played on Saturday at Luton. Result:—

Small Heath 2 goals.

Luton Town 1 goal.

Teams:—

Luton: Daw; Dow and McCurdy; J. Brown, Holdstock, and Williams; W. Brown, Brock, Burbage, McInnes, and Eckford.

Small Heath: Robinson; Archer and Pratt; A. v. Wagmore, and Leake; Bennett, Aston, McRoberts, Main, and Wharton.

This, the last of Luton's home engagements and possibly the last Second League match at Luton for many a long day, had a very unsatisfactory termination—unsatisfactory not only from the fact that they had the misfortune to be without the services of Dow for the best part of the game, but also because of the supposed eccentricities of the referee, which lost them the match. Mr. Jones, of Leicester, has been to Luton near upon half-a-dozen times this season, and it cannot be said that he has improved his reputation; indeed, the spectators on this occasion did not disguise their disgust at his decisions and vented their feelings in a demonstration at the close of the game, which if not rough was certainly noisy.

The homesters lost the toss, and kicked off towards the Bury end in the face of a hot summer sun. Robinson was the first of the custodians called upon to defend his charge, Holdstock, very early in the game, getting in a long shot which caused him to handle. Before the match was many minutes old, Dow had to leave the field on account of an injury to his foot, and though after having it attended by Lawson, he was able to return, he was not able to play with his usual confidence, and indeed found it so painful that at the interval he retired altogether.

Small Heath were the most troublesome on the left wing, which, failing to meet with the strong opposition which Dow is as a rule able to offer, made frequent headway. After one of these runs, McRoberts gained possession, and a stinging shot very fortunately for Luton hit the upright instead of finding the net. Weakened as they were, it was not surprising to find Luton hard pressed at times. Small Heath certainly had the best of matters in the first half, and the wonder was that some of their early efforts did not score.

In one instance, Austin, their inside-right, got in a long dropping shot which Daw just managed to tip over the bar, and almost immediately after he was severely tested with a smart low drive from Bennett, another corner having to be conceded. This, however, Luton managed to clear, and then, after a couple of attempts by Main, the locals made a run, Roland Brown being seen to advantage. Brock was in the centre ready to receive, but Robinson was there too, and the latter got in first. Eckford afterwards sent over, and Dow receiving from a corner put into the custodian's hands.

On several occasions when the Heathens got down, they suffered the penalty of the offside rule through infringement, but when the interval was drawing close, Main, standing at close quarters, received the leather and beat Daw, the point being allowed in spite of the protests of the Luton crowd. But if their disgust was evident just at that moment, their indignation was even more pronounced when directly afterwards McRoberts, who certainly appeared to be unquestionably offside, netted the ball and the goal was allowed.

Thus the interval found Luton with two goals to the bad, but crossing over, they soon began to make tracks for the railway goal, in spite of the fact that they were playing only ten men. Their display from now to the finish was a long way ahead of the form they had shown in the first half. Almost continually they were giving trouble, and the narrow escapes of the Heathens' fortress raised the interest of the spectators to an exorbitant pitch. Under these circumstances, the fact of the referee disallowing a pretty goal scored by Eckford from a centre by Brown in no way allayed their feelings.

Fortune certainly was not with the homesters, one very lucky save being made by Robinson from Burbage, the ball cannoning off him into play. Luton, however, did not go altogether unrewarded, a very good goal by Burbage, about which there could not possibly be any question, being allowed. The finish came without any further change, and the spectators hurried off towards the dressing rooms, where there seemed a prospect of lively times, but, led by Tommy McInnes, the players closed round the referee, who was thus enabled to reach his box unmolested.