

Date: 23 November 1895

Opposition: Darwen

Competition: League

Mercury

23 November  
1895

## Liverpool Mercury,

### LIVERPOOL v. DARWEN.

Darwen paid their first visit to Anfield this season on Saturday. The weather was of a charming nature for the pursuit of the winter game; yet the attendance was not of the greatest dimensions, there being only 5000 spectators present. The teams turned out as follows:—Liverpool: M'Queen, goal; Goldie and Wilkie, backs; M'Cartney, Keech, and Holmes, half-backs; Geary, Ross, Bradshaw, Becton, and Hannah, forwards. Darwen: Briggs, goal; Lomax and Leach, backs; Forrest, Haddow, and M'Avoy, half-backs; Shaw, Hunt, Maxwell, Tyrer, and Townley, forwards. After a late start Darwen went right away, and looked like scoring in the first few minutes; but Townley's shot went over, after striking the bar. In a trice Ross and Geary had transferred matters, and Liverpool were given a great chance by the aid of a free kick in the goal mouth; but the ball went into the net untouched by a second player. After this point both sides settled down to even exchanges, the visitors' forwards being the first to initiate a decided attack; but Wilkie and Goldie putting in solid work easily returned the assault. A long pass out to Hannah appeared all right a little later on, but the autocrat of the whistle thought otherwise, and stopped his gallop. The Darwen men came again in good style with a charge upon M'Queen's citadel, and both Forrest and Townley missed possible chances by late shooting. Eventually the pressure was relieved, and Ross put Bradshaw in possession, and away he went at top speed, brushing aside all opposition; but for the first time among the many great efforts he has executed somehow and unfortunately he failed to lower the Darwen colours, the ball striking the bottom of the post and going into touch. Almost immediately, from a run by Ross and Geary, the Liverpool centre again suffered hard lines with a shot which struck the upright and rebounded into play. Up to half-time the home team had decidedly the better of the game, but failed to utilise their opportunities to the fullest extent. On resuming, Liverpool were immediately on the attack, but disjointed action again lost a great opening. M'Avoy, by exceedingly good tactics, brought himself into prominence, successfully tackling Ross and opening up the game for Townley, but the latter sent wide at the finish. A smart dash by Maxwell was the next item, but Wilkie interposed, and Ross and Geary slipped along on the right, but Becton failed to direct aright at the final attempt. For a spell Liverpool were busy attacking, but were met with a most stubborn and effective defence, in which Haddow, however, was too vigorous, and after being penalised several times he was at this stage of the game ordered off the field. Against crippled forces it was fully expected that Liverpool would win easily, but although greater vigour and determination were thrown into the game, the Darwen team defended well right up to the close, as well as kicked out on every possible occasion, and the match ultimately wound up with a pointless draw.

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Liverpool are a terribly disappointing team! Against the Arsenal they introduced into their play a large amount of earnestness, which has ever been wanting in the efforts of the Liverpool eleven for the past season and a half, and it was surmised, and rightly so, that an exhibition of the same tactics would be forthcoming on Saturday against the Darwen club. Instead, however, of the players buckling to their work, as they ought to have done, especially as they know their position, for the right to compete in the test matches is none too secure, some of them went about their league engagement as though they had not the remotest idea that their employers and supporters anxiously wished them to win, or that anything of importance attached itself to the result. Consequently the game was of the tamest description during the first half, and in the second, when Haddow had been ordered off the ground, became ragged in the extreme. Self-assurance and conceit are the prime factors towards the moral defeat and not the oft-expressed "bad luck" as many urge. This "bad luck!" in regard to the unsuccessful shooting, and also to shots being charged down, was brought about by the indifference and pottering about of the forwards in the first half, which allowed the Darwen defence to thoroughly weigh up and grasp the methods of the home attack, and thus become virtual masters of the situation. Virtue, in the shape of honest work, as a rule brings its own reward, and had the Liverpool eleven, the forwards in particular, put a little more vim and honest energy into their last Saturday's occupation they would not now have to lament the loss of a valuable point. With Ross's team is a thoroughly earnest mood, there is no comparison between them and the "Peaceful Valley" eleven. The defence of both sides is about equal, but forward the Liverpool quintet, when in the mood, are much superior. But clever, scientific, and speedy as these five are, they will not win matches either away or at home if they do not alter somehow or another their easy-going style of manipulation. M'Queen, owing to the excellent defensive work of Wilkie and Goldie, had but very little to do; yet one shot from Tyrer in the second half called for his best efforts, and right well did he attend to his onerous duty. Wilkie and Goldie, as their clean record shows, played a sterling compact game, and assisted each other ungrudgingly when either was in difficulties. Beyond a little reckless rushing at an opponent now and then, and missing both the ball and the man, there is no complaint against Goldie, whilst both he and Wilkie delivered their kicks in an admirably finished manner. The half-back line was not anything so good as was the case the week previous. M'Cartney, although he worked hard, was not at his best, but this might have been caused by the entire failure of Keech to fill the centre position. The loss of form of the latter was most surprising, as he has given such consistently good displays so far. Holmes, as usual, was head and shoulders above any of the defence in polished and wonderfully effective work. In

fact, he, on the Liverpool side, and M'Avoy, the left half of the Darwen team, were the most prominent players on the field. The whole of the forward play was stiff, and often ragged. Owing to the indulgence of fancy tricks on the part of one or two the attack lost all its usual incisiveness and sting, and when in the later stages the players rallied and toned their exertions with an improved display of dash their opponents did not hesitate to kick out at every available opportunity, and thus never gave the home forwards the least possible chance of having a shy at goal. The greater amount of blame lies upon the inside men, as both Geary and Hannah made the most of the chances afforded them, although knowing that the old Everton centre has gained such a big reputation as a dangerous shot it would undoubtedly have added to the success of the home combination if he had taken the liberty of levelling a hot shot on several occasions when he otherwise passed back to Ross. Briggs, on the Darwen side, did some excellent work at the closing stages of the game, and without much doubt saved his side from defeat. He was ably assisted by Lomax and Leach, both of whom kicked superbly throughout. M'Avoy was the best of a good set of half-backs, among whom was the old veteran Forrest. Haddow was rightly dismissed from duty for his questionable tricks all through the game. In fact, almost all the team did a lot of work which borders upon illegality very closely, and under a stricter referee these tactics would not pass unattended. The forwards are not of a startling class, and even poorly as Keech played they never got into any formidable or dangerous passing all the game. Townsley on the left was perhaps the most prominent, being well fed by Tyrer. Next week Liverpool have a severe task on hand in meeting the Leicester Fosse at home.