

Date: 4 January 1896

Opposition: Rotherham Town

Competition: League

Mercury

Sheffield Independ.

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Liverpool Mercury

LIVERPOOL v. ROTHERHAM TOWN.

This game took place at Rotherham on Saturday, before about 2000 spectators. The weather was fine, and in every way favourable for the attendance of spectators, and the absence of the usual "record" which the visit of Liverpool invariably brings to various home grounds occasioned some surprise. Both teams were well represented, the names of the respective sides being—Liverpool: Storer, goal; Goldie and Wilkie, backs; M'Cartney, M'Que, and Holmes, half-backs; Geary, M'Vean, Allan, Ross, and Bradshaw, forwards. Rotherham: Wilkinson, goal; T. Porteous and M'Ardle, backs; Longden, D. Porteous, and Broadhead, half-backs; Webster, Bryant, Wheatcroft, M'Connick, and M'Cabe, forwards. Referee, Mr. Townsend, Walsall. Upon starting, the home team made a forward movement, but were repulsed by Goldie, and after a few exchanges it was early seen that the Liverpool men had an easy task before them. Repeated attacks were, however, cleared, till Geary sprinted past M'Ardle, and gave to Allan, who scored the first point. Keeping possession almost continually, but without being dangerous, only another point was added up to half-time, again by Allan. On resuming, Rotherham, by long passing, swooped down upon Storer, and thrice in succession he was called upon when in difficulties, but he emerged from the fray with splendid judgment, and was not again so seriously troubled. Shortly afterwards Ross nipped in with one of his old-timed thunderbolts, Allan following his captain's example with a fourth, while Bradshaw recorded the fifth point with a flying shot, similar to that with which Milward scored against Liverpool last year at Goodison Park. Towards the finish of the game the Anfield men were continually bombarding their opponents' goal, but without result, and a hollow victory rested with the visitors by 5 goals to nil.

THE SHEFFIELD AND ROTHERHAM INDEPENDENT.

ROTHERHAM TOWN v. LIVERPOOL.

These teams met on the Clifton Grove ground, Rotherham, on Saturday afternoon. The turf was in excellent condition, and the weather cloudy and warm. Not more than 200 spectators had assembled to witness the start, but the number subsequently increased to about 1000. Rotherham kicked off towards Middle lane five minutes before time, but the Liverpool right took possession, and a centre by Geary called out the home defence. The visitors continued on the aggressive, M'Ardle having again to pull up Geary. Then Wheatcroft broke away, but Wilkie forced the home front rank to retire, and Ross shot wide of the home uprights. A "trip" enabled Rotherham to cross the dividing line, but they had at once to fall back. Another free-kick fell to the home team, and an appeal for hands in the visitors' territory was conceded. Tom Porteous took the free-kick and placed the ball in the net, but there was no goal. A lively scrimmage

ensued in the Liverpool goal, and getting away, Geary put a good one across, but Bradshaw aimed erratically. Hands against Broadhead close on the twelve yards line was dangerous for Rotherham, but Bradshaw sent the leather a shade too high. The visitors exhibited good combination, the forwards passing neatly. The home halves and backs were kept on the defensive. Bradshaw had the home goal at his mercy, but shot wide of the mark, and Ross later just missed. Eighteen minutes from the start Geary gave Allan an opening, and with a grand shot he struck inside the upright, and the ball rebounded into the net, Wilkinson having no chance. On the resumption Rotherham made a brief attack on the right. Holmes shot over, and Wilkinson saved at a critical moment. Another brief siege of the visitors' goal came from the home left, and then the right advanced, but Webster shot wide. Some fine passing enabled the visitors again to get into close quarters, and Holmes shot just over the bar. Webster and Bryant made a dash to the Liverpool end, but the former was penalised for being off-side. Later, Geary was accidentally kicked by M'Ardle. The referee gave Liverpool a free-kick, but the home defence prevailed. M'Cabe next roused some enthusiasm with a fine run, but he was pulled up by Goldie. The game was more equal for some time, Webster being especially active on the home side, but the all-round passing of the visitors kept the home team constantly active. One or two shots Wilkinson had to kick out sharply. A corner fell to the visitors, but Webster broke away, and more pressure on the home goal followed. Allan scored a second goal just before the interval, the Liverpool left wing being mainly instrumental in bringing about the success. A corner fell to the Liverpool right wing, but Geary placed this and a second one wide of the mark. M'Cabe was making a dash towards Middle lane, when the whistle for the interval stopped his career. Half-time—Liverpool, 2 goals; Rotherham Town, 0 goal.

After the change of ends the visitors ran down on the right, and Wilkinson had to concede a corner. Broadhead headed out, and Longden tried to raise the siege. M'Ardle got the ball away from a scrimmage, and Longden had to give the visitors a corner, which they failed to improve upon. A raid by Rotherham was spoiled by M'Connick handling. Then Bryant was tripped by Ross, and Rotherham had a free kick. Another came to Rotherham, and still they were driven back, and yet a third followed without Rotherham getting far across the line. An unfair decision of the linesman against Rotherham led to an appeal to the referee, who decided in favour of the home team, to the satisfaction of the spectators. Storer, who had been having an easy time, had to handle twice at the call of the home left wing. The Rotherham forwards struggled hard to gain an ad-

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vance, but Wheatcroft was weak in the centre. The left wing was the most active, M'Cormick especially working hard. M'Cabe finely prevented Geary from scoring at a critical moment. The visitors were, however, not to be denied. Bradshaw took a corner, which nearly brought about the downfall of the home citadel. M'Ardle, heading out finely, enabled Webster to make a sprint. He was declared off-side on receiving the ball from Brant. Wilkinson scooped out a shot by Allan, but Ross clean beat him, and secured the third goal eighteen minutes after the interval. A minute later Allan had added a fourth. Rotherham attacked, but Storer was too active to be beaten, and Rotherham were soon again on the defensive. Tom Porteous did some good kicking, but Bradshaw, with a splendid shot, made a fifth goal. Webster and Bryant repeatedly tried to pass the Liverpool backs, but they finished up badly more than once. At the other end Wilkinson made a grand save when called upon by Ross, and although Bradshaw taking the rebound sent in a terrific shot, the ball struck the home custodian and the backs managed to get the leather away. Liverpool continued to swarm round the home goal, only the sterling play of the home backs preventing the visitors from increasing the majority. Result:—

LIVERPOOL 5 goals.

ROTHERHAM TOWN 0 goal.

ROTHERHAM TOWN.—Wilkinson, goal; T. Porteous and McArdle, backs; Longden, D. Porteous, and Broadhead, half-backs; Webster, Bryant, Wheatcroft, M'Cormick, and M'Cabe, forwards.

LIVERPOOL.—Storer, goal; Goldie and Wilkie, backs; M'Cartney, M'Que, and Holmes, half-backs; Geary, M'Vean, Allan, Ross, and Bradshaw, forwards.

Referee, Mr. Townsend (Walsall).

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The Anfield ground on Wednesday last was a sight to gladden the eyes of all good sportsmen, and the enormous attendance which assembled only goes to prove that Liverpool, with anything like a decent team, back again in the first division, will receive much more liberal support than their most sanguine admirers would ever anticipate. Recognising the importance of the affair the Manchester executive had sent the men to Lytham, while to keep the Liverpool players out of danger from their indiscreet friends they were taken to Birkdale the day before the match. Of the two teams upon their appearance on the field, the visitors were easily first favourites, as they looked as fresh and as fit for an arduous struggle as could be imagined; but, as is now a matter of ancient history, they failed altogether to come up to expectations, and were unmistakably lucky not to have received a heavier and more decisive defeat. Adverse criticism all round was heard at the composition of the home forward rank, but their versatility, so often commented upon, and the offer of a substantial bonus, caused them to set to work with terrible earnestness, and nothing but real bad luck kept them from scoring in the first quarter of an hour, when Liverpool monopolised almost all the play. From then to half time a real ding-dong, give-no-quarter style of game ensued, in which both sides had excellent chances, although it must be noticed that the Liverpoolians were invariably the more dangerous when in the neighbourhood of goal than their opponents, in spite of the "Cits" showing the prettier and more combined football. In the second stage there was but one team in the swim. When Ross had notched the first point out of a scrimmage the players of the rival seaport caved in in a most abject manner, and as a result all interest was taken out of the play, and it was but the exhibition of a little overweening confidence on the part of the left defence that let the Manchester men in, and allowed them to score in the last minute of the game, quite unexpectedly. To a man the Liverpool players did well, but, if anything, M'Que and Goldie even outshone the brilliant efforts of their confreres. The centre half did not open in quite his usual style, but, being given a quarter of an hour's grace, while his forwards were doing most of the work at the opening stages, he had time to gather himself together, and at the close might be said to have defeated the Manchester men himself, so ubiquitous and unrivalled was his performance. The forwards, owing no doubt to their peculiar formation, never worked in that unison they are famed for, but what was wanting in harmony was doubly made up for in earnestness. Viewing the game impartially, and with the utmost judicial spirit, there is little doubt that Liverpool will, with an exhibition of the same verve and dash, have a great chance of adding another win to their record when the return engagement is played at Manchester in April. The greatest praise the "Cits" can be given is that they are unquestionably the finest team that Liverpool have met in the second division, and that they thoroughly deserve their high position in the table.

For the second time in the Liverpool club's record this season the same team was turned out in successive matches, and as a result another splendid victory was added to their list. The game at Rotherham calls for little comment, for from start to finish the visitors were in every

department much superior. Storer was highly tried on two or three occasions, but with the utmost sang froid he calmly and ably got through his duty. Goldie again was excellent, and there is little doubt that this player and Wilkie as a pair would be difficult to improve upon. The half-backs, as usual, played their honest, sterling kind of game, but the forwards, although successful in the scoring line, were disjointing, and played more in the style of the old Second Division forwards than like a finished first-class combination. The Rotherham players are not fliers by any means, but Porteous at back, the whole of the half-backs, and Wheatcroft and Webster forwards, best represent the team of the iron district.

Next Saturday the Woolwich Arsenal appear at Anfield, and special interest is added by the fact that Storer will oppose his late clubmates. Another attraction, also, is the fact that a party of Alderman Houlding's friends, comprising, it is surmised, the Lord Mayor, Alderman Forwood, and others, are expected to grace the proceedings with their presence.