

The Great Games: Munday beats Wednesday on a Saturday!

Saturday December 30th, 1899: Chesterfield Town 1 - Sheffield Wednesday 0.

Herbert's goal settled the issue but the Derbyshire Times writer, who may have been the future club manager, EF Hind, seems more diverted by the pleasure of giving it large to a bunch of previously scathing Sheffield reporters! Had he been able to stop giving it large in the press box for a moment, he might have got round to including the Chesterfield Town line-up, which was:

		Hancock		
	Pilgrim		Fletcher	
	Ballantyne		Bell	Downie
Morley	Thacker	Gooing	Munday	Geary

(Scroll down to see the report)

A really brilliant performance was that of Saturday by Chesterfield against the famed Wednesday, and from one end of the county to the other the victory was extremely popular. And remembering remarks in the Sheffield papers, when Chesterfield first applied for admission into the Second Division, it was a distinct pleasure to read in the "Independent" on Monday morning that "Sheffield Wednesday's defeat at Chesterfield does not necessarily indicate any great deterioration in form. It has possibly escaped the notice of many footballers how well the Chesterfield men have been playing of late, and what smart performances they have on several occasions accomplished against the best teams in the Second League. Leicester Fosse and Bolton Wanderers could only draw in the North Derbyshire town, and Newton Heath were beaten there. At New Brighton, Wednesday, the Fosse, and Small Heath could get only one point, but Chesterfield got two. Victories at home over Newton Heath and Sheffield Wednesday, and away against Grimsby Town and Luton, constitute a fairly good eight days' work, and that is what Chesterfield have accomplished this Christmas tide. If the public don't adequately support such a club and a team as this, they don't know a good thing when they see it. What a climb down! But the inference is correct; at the present time Chesterfield is a better team than Wednesday!

And "Looker-On"—I quoted from this writer some time ago, and answered a few of his sarcastic utterances—runs upon a similar track in the "Sheffield Telegraph." He says: "So far Chesterfield's away matches have seen the team at its best, and in the course of seven such fixtures the team has only once failed to score less than three goals. Can any other League club say the same? Five times have three goals been scored, once five (against Gainsborough Trinity), and once only one (in the first match of the season, against Wednesday). Yet in all these seven matches I do not think the team has played a better game than on Saturday, when, in spite of the strong wind, which had a very prejudicial effect, there was plenty of good football seen." And this "good football" resulted in the downfall of Wednesday! "Looker-On" has now made the "amende honourable," and must regret that he ever suggested that it would be an insult to Wednesday to have to meet the Chesterfield team.

It was a great match! And there was the largest crowd ever known to assemble upon the Recreation Ground, a large number travelling from the outlying town. The sum of £165 was taken at the "gate," and this will help to counterbalance some of the losses the club sustained by the wretched teams they had to meet in the English Cup competition. But if the takings were highly satisfactory to the directors, so also was the spirit and enthusiasm displayed by the team. It is sometimes said that footballers only "play for their wages." Saturday's match proved this to be a calumny, at least so far as the Chesterfield team as at present constituted is concerned. Every man appeared to have his heart in the success of the club, and played with a determination which was deserving of the wonderful victory achieved.

Wednesday were lucky in playing with the wind in the first half. This helped them considerably, the ball being continually carried back into the Chesterfield goal. But the backs, Fletcher and Pilgrim, were never seen to better advantage, and as to Hancock, well, his reputation is established. May he be able to maintain it! If he can he will prove to be one of the best goalkeepers in the country. This is saying a great deal, but not too much.

Some of Hancock's saves were really marvellous. Upon one occasion Tommy Crawshaw looked certain to score. He put in a stinging fiver, but Hancock, without the least mistake or hesitation, hit it over the bar. Upon another occasion a lightning low shot came at him as if out of a gun; one of the most difficult to negotiate! But showing any amount of judgment and resource, he scooped it up, or, to be more accurate, it might be said he fielded it as if it was a cricket ball. To him was largely the credit due of lowering the Sheffielders' colours.

But not entirely by any means! With the exception of Morley, who has any amount of dash, but not sufficient judgment yet, all the men are worthy of praise. Gooing played a sterling game from start to finish, and was continually leading his men through the Blades' ranks, and Munday worried the defence considerably. After Hancock, or with Hancock, I ought to place Munday, who scored the goal, the only goal, and the winning goal. Geary and Thacker showed the visitors a clean pair of heels time after time, but Thacker rather spoilt his display by roughness, which brought the referee down upon him (w.c.e. though it is only fair to say he was provoked by the dirty work of the Sheffield backs.

The halves improved the shining hour, and were far superior to the trio on the other side. Bell had Crawshaw bottled up. Downie was a treat to watch from beginning to end, and Ballantyne did not give the renowned Spikesley a look in, in fact it is said that once during the match Spikesley remarked to him, "Well, leave us enough room to walk." He was allowed to walk but not to repeat the trick of the first match of the season.

One goal to none certainly did not represent the superiority of the Chesterfield team. At least three goals ought to have been credited to them. And I cannot understand the referee giving a throw-up after Gooing had been charged in the back most foully by Langley within the twelve yards' line. Mr Stanway consulted the line-men after having blown his whistle, and the result was a throw-up. Undoubtedly a penalty should have been awarded. I do not wish, however, to say anything unfair of the referee. Taking the game as a whole, he proved himself most capable and strictly fair, and there was perhaps a reason for this decision which was not clear to the spectators.