



Midland League 1891-92

Midland League Table 1891-92

#		P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	Rotherham Town	20	13	1	6	70	41	27
2	Gainsborough Trinity	20	12	2	6	49	31	26
3	Burslem Port Vale	20	11	1	8	49	33	23
4	Wednesbury Old Athletic	20	9	5	6	49	41	23
5	Burton Wanderers	20	10	2	8	48	32	22
6	Doncaster Rovers	20	8	5	7	30	36	21
7	Grantham Rovers	20	6	6	8	29	37	18
8	Loughborough Town	20	8	1	11	42	46	17
9	Long Eaton Rangers	20	5	7	8	32	46	17
10	Derby Junction	20	4	5	11	21	41	13
11	Leicester Fosse	20	5	3	12	21	56	13
			91	38	91	439	439	

Winner:	Rotherham Town
Runner-up:	Gainsborough Trinity
Third place:	Burslem Port Vale
Wooden spoon:	Leicester Fosse
Games played:	110
Missing Results:	0
Goals scored:	439
Biggest win:	Rotherham 11-0 Leicester Fosse
Highest scoring:	Loughborough 11- 2 Doncaster Rovers
Biggest home win:	Rotherham 11-0 Leicester Fosse
Biggest away win:	Derby Junction 0-5 Gainsborough Trinity Leicester Fosse 1- 6 Burton Wanderers Loughborough 0-5 Gainsborough

The Midland League was founded in 1889, just one year after the Football League. In its inaugural season 11 clubs participated- Burton Wanderers, Derby Junction, Derby Midland, Gainsborough Trinity, Leek, Lincoln City, Notts Rangers, Sheffield, Staveley FC, Warwick County- from 6 counties. Three teams, Sheffield, Notts Rangers and Leek did not complete the season. Lincoln City, the first champions and four others would go on to play in the Football League. During the early days, the Champions were elected to the Football League and in return those Football League clubs who failed to be re-elected were welcomed into the Midland League. Both Doncaster and Lincoln had spells oscillating between the Football League and Midland League. As the elite clubs became bigger and stronger, they applied to send their reserve sides into the Midland League. Within less than a decade reserve teams accounted for more than half of the Midland League.

Leicester Fosse and Loughborough AFC applied to be admitted to the Midland League during the spring of 1891 All applications were considered at the annual general meeting of the Midland Football League held in May 1891 at the Maypole Hotel in Nottingham. It was unanimously resolved that each club becoming a member of the League should pay £5 in addition to the usual subscription, the money to be paid at the same time as the subscription and be forfeited in the event of any club not fulfilling its fixtures and to be refunded to those clubs who carried out all of their matches. Staveley and Derby Junction were re-elected members of the League. In addition to the Fosse and Loughborough, there were applications for membership from, Doncaster Rovers, Grantham Rovers, Sheffield Attercliffe and Wednesbury Old Athletic. The election of both Leicestershire clubs, along with Wednesbury Athletic – to fill the vacancies caused by the retirement of Lincoln City, Kidderminster, and Warwick County – was widely celebrated by the county's association football fans, who would get the opportunity to watch the likes of Rotherham Town, Burton Wanderers, Derby Junction and of course Luffs v Fosse clashes in a prestigious league competition.

Midland League Clubs 1891-92

Club	Founded	Ground	Colours	Nickname	Additional Information
Burslem Port Vale	1876 -	Cobridge Athletic Ground, Stoke-on-Trent		Valiants	They have never played top-flight football, and hold the record for the most seasons in the English Football League (111) and in the second tier (41) without reaching the first tier.
Burton Wanderers	1871-1901	Derby Turn, Burton-on-Trent			The club were members of the Football League for three seasons in the mid-1890s. In 1901 they merged with Burton Swifts to form Burton United.
Derby Junction	1870-1895	Vulcan Athletic Ground		Juncs	Derby Junction first developed as an old boys' team for Junction Street School, and were renamed Derby Junction Street in 1885, at some point dropping 'Street'
Doncaster Rovers	1879 -	The Intake Ground, Doncaster			Intake ground began as a rented field at the rear of the Yorkshire Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, originally called the "Deaf and Dumb Ground".
Gainsborough Trinity	1873-	The Northolme, Gainsborough			
Grantham Rovers		Harlaxton Road, Grantham		Rovers	Grantham Rovers disbanded in 1897 after incurring debts of £140.
Leicester Fosse	1884 -	Walnut Street, Leicester		Fossils/Ancients	
Loughborough AFC	1886 - 1900	Athletic Grounds, Loughborough		Luffs	
Long Eaton Rangers	1881-1891	The Recreation Grounds, Long Eaton		Eatonians	For a brief period in the 1880s, Long Eaton Rangers had a legitimate claim to being one of the best teams in the country. They were founding members of the second ever league, The Combination, in 1888, and when that folded, the Football Alliance in 1889.
Rotherham Town	1878-96	Clifton Lane, Rotherham			The original club was founded in 1878 as Lunar Rovers, becoming Rotherham in 1882, and eventually Rotherham Town. In 1889 the club became a founder member of the Midland League. They were champions in 1892 and 1893, and were subsequently elected to the Second Division of the Football League in 1893. The club's League tenure lasted just three seasons, finishing in 14th, 12th and 15th place (out of 16). At the end of the 1895-96 season, they failed to apply for re-election and subsequently folded
Wednesbury Old Athletic	1874-1893	Wednesbury Oval Grounds		Old 'Uns	The club began life as the Wednesbury Literary & Athletic Institute in October 1874, adopting the more familiar title of Wednesbury Old Athletic Club the following year. They became a founder member of the Birmingham & District Football Association in December 1875 and won the inaugural Birmingham Senior Cup competition.

At the commencement of the 1891-92 season there were twelve member clubs. Wednesbury had been winners of the highly regarded Birmingham Cup in earlier years and prior to the admittance to the Midland League they had been competing in the Birmingham & District League. Doncaster Rovers, Grantham Rovers and Loughborough were familiar to each other, having competed in the eight-team Midland Football Alliance League the previous season. For Leicester Fosse, the fifth new club to the Midland League, it was their first league competition.

Leicester's first Midland League game was played on Saturday 21 September 1891 at home against Derby Junction, in front of just a few hundred spectators. Derby Junction were founded as an old boys' team for Junction Street School in the early 1880s and were renamed Derby Junction Street in 1885. At some point the 'Street' was dropped from the club's name. They played at Derby Arboretum, a park in the town centre. Most notably they were one of the founders of the Midland League and English Challenge Cup semi-finalists in the 1888, in a cup run that included a 2-1 victory over the holders, Blackburn Rovers. They lost to eventual winners West Bromwich Albion in the semi-final. The following season they were defeated in the first round by local rivals Derby County. They folded in 1895 as professionalism began to spread into the game. The encounter between Fosse and Derby Junction was played under a burning autumn sun. Derby, resplendent in their green shirts with a gold sash, white knickers, and green socks played the first half with the sun in their faces. Leicester had worst of luck, with "several shots only failing by going over a trifle too high". George Old in goal was in sparkling form for the Fosse. In the second half both teams played a "fine game". Jimmy Atter broke the deadlock with a "fine shot", scoring Leicester's first-ever goal in the Midland League, to secure the two points.

The Luffs made an unfortunate start to their inaugural Midland League in front of 1,500 spectators at Cobridge stadium against Burslem Port Vale. Tomlinson (goalkeeper), Spiby (back), Plackett (half-back), Lowe, Needham, Carnelly and Cross reached Burslem, but the remaining four team members missed the connection at Derby, and were left behind. Mr Kingscott, the referee allowed the Luffs to play four local men as substitutes. Although they did their best, they were "useless". Considering the circumstances perhaps not surprisingly Burslem scored seven goals, three before half-time. Late in the game a beautiful pass by Lowe was converted into a goal by one of the substitutes playing in the centre. Walter Cockain, Loughborough's secretary had to write to the press explaining that the team's poor performance was not the norm and that the team was strongest it had ever been.

Loughborough's erratic debut Midland League season included 11-2 and 6-2 wins and 7-1 and 5-0 defeats in 6 games played during October and November.

Billed as the "Championship of Leicestershire", the eagerly anticipated first Midland League Leicestershire Derby Day took place at the Athletics Grounds on 14 November 1891. The Fosse went into the game as the team in form as they had won two of their opening three Midland League encounters compared to just one in five for the Luffs. However, Fosse were severely weakened by the loss of their influential captain Ernest Nuttall with a knee injury and Harry Bailey with a heavy cold. Their places were filled by Albert Vickers at left half-back and Billy Davis, as right-back. In addition to these two players, that formed the backbone of the side, Fosse were also minus Arthur Bennett and according to the local newspaper reporter, "all that could be hoped from a Leicester viewpoint was to give Loughborough a good game". More than 3,000 spectators crammed into the Athletic Grounds, the match being one of the leading attractions of Loughborough's annual Fairs Week. Two football special trains bought a large contingent of Fosse supporters, who made themselves heard with renditions of their well-known, "Play up, Fosse" chant! In a fast end-to-end first half played on heavy ground, William Freestone missed an open goal for the Luffs and the Fosse had two goals disallowed within minutes of each other, both for offside, before Leicester took the lead thanks to a fast shot from Mouel. George Old, Leicester's goal-keeper kept out several hard shots. Albert Carnelly dribbled through a host of players, before equalising for Loughborough with a low shot. The Fosse broke away after a period of intense pressure from the Luffs before Mouel centred accurately, enabling Atter to score. This stimulated the Fosse, and Tomlinson was called onto make a spectacular save. Loughborough retaliated with Shelton heading the ball past Old, making the score 2-2 at half-time. But "oh dear and oh dear! - what a Fosse falling off there was in the second half". The Luffs penned the Fosse in their own half for much of the time. Lowe scored after a smart sprint on the right-wing and the Luffs extended their advantage with a lightning shot from Carnelly. Fosse heads dropped

and almost every man adopted rough tactics. Carnelly now dominant tore Fosse's defence apart scoring his third and the Luffs fifth. The best goal of the day, however, was the final one by Freestone, who scored from a centre from Lowe, the goal-keeper having no chance. Although Loughborough were clearly the better side, numerous allegations were made against the decisions of the referee. But for this unfortunate shortcoming, Leicester press reported that the defeat would have been "less pronounced" and that the "man behind the whistle is more to be pitied than blamed -that he erred in ignorance rather than intent". The result, 6-2 in favour of the north Leicestershire side. The only game played in the Midland League that day, put the Luffs and the Fosse on the same points.

The reverse fixture that took place two weeks later was an incredibly special one in the history of Leicester Fosse, as it was the inaugural Midland League game staged at their new Walnut Street ground. According to legend Mr Joseph Johnson, a local businessman and a senior Fosse Committee member was strolling along the river with his niece, Miss Westland, when she noticed an area of land bordered by Grasmere Street and Filbert Street on the edge of borough of Leicester and thought it would make an ideal location for a football pitch. Leicester Corporation leased the three and a quarter acre site to Leicester Fosse for their new home, with Mr Johnson personally guaranteeing the rent. Considerable work had to be undertaken to enclose and develop the land fit for Midland League football. Since Filbert Street was a very minor thoroughfare, as can be seen from the 1902 map, the ground was initially known as Walnut Street, as it was felt that few fans would know how to find the ground. The first-ever game was played against Nottingham Forest on 7 November.

Excitement for the Leicestershire derby was intense. The Luffs John Tomlinson, a local boot and shoemaker missed the train and Loughborough had to start the game without a recognised goalkeeper. Luckily for the Luffs, William Ward, their giant 6ft 2-inch reserve goalkeeper, who was watching the game as a spectator, went between the sticks. Playing with the wind, Loughborough were chiefly on the attack throughout the first half. The stubborn defence of Old and Rowson together with the bad state of the ground for shooting, kept the scoring down. Loughborough went into half-time up by two goals, from Freestone and Carnelly. Just a few minutes into the second half, Leicester scored their only goal. Mouel sent in a long shot, and Ward, moving with great difficulty in his ordinary boots through the mud, failed to reach the ball. To protect their vulnerable keeper, the Luffs switched to playing four backs and outclassed the Fosse to the end, winning the game 2-1. Although the Fosse had strengthened their team, they hardly showed any improvement in form since their 6-2 drubbing at the hands of the Luffs and the forwards had fewer shots on goal. Considering the circumstances Ward performed well but had nothing like as much to do as his counterpart in the Fosse goal. The Luffs played the best they had all season and played some "pretty combination" football. Plackett, Luffs' specialist left half broke his nose after heading the ball simultaneously with an opponent.

During the early weeks of the season there were some indications that Staveley were experiencing some difficulties and by December, and following an 8-0 defeat at Burton Wanderers, they submitted their resignation, citing "financial embarrassment. Consequently, their results had to be expunged whilst the league was still in progress.

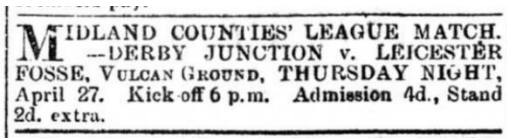
In October Long Eaton Rangers became the first club in Midland League history to suffer a ground suspension after "crowd trouble" following a home defeat by Gainsborough Trinity. John Lees [Long Eaton] was sent off for "insubordination" from the field by referee Arthur Kingscott, a man local to Long Eaton and a high profile official in both refereeing circles and the Midland League. After much debate, the Football Association ignored the home club's objections and Rangers were banned from playing on their ground for one month.

Rotherham Town only dropped one home point during the course of the Midland League season – against Grantham Rovers in late September.

The penalty was introduced at the start of the season – the first scored in the Midland League was by Middleton for Derby Junction at Grantham Rovers on 31 October.

Buron Wanderers, Wednesbury Old Athletic and reigning champions Gainsborough Trinity were the teams that led the way during the first half of the season with Loughborough and Burslem Port Vale showing good enough form to stay in the chase for honours.

Leicester had to wait until 9 January 1892 to win their first league game at their new ground, when they beat soon to be crowned Midland League Champions, Rotherham Town 4-1. This proved to be the highlight of Leicester's season. The Yorkshire side got their revenge in the reverse fixture in April 1893, when they humiliated ten men Fosse 11-0 – the club's heaviest-ever Midland League defeat. The missing player was Amos Atkins, who has the rather unusual and short Fosse senior record of "played one, missed one". After clinching a 1-0 victory at home against Wednesbury Old Athletic in late January, Fosse failed to win another game in their first Midland League campaign.



Derby Daily Telegraph – 26 April 1893

Rotherham's dramatic turn round began in February following a 6-1 home win over Gainsborough. Although they lost the return fixture two weeks later they played some exciting football and won all their remaining matches. Gainsborough's final two games produced a draw at Grantham and a win at Doncaster, leaving both Rotherham and Wednesbury three points adrift with two

games to play. The intriguing feature of the last week of the season was that the two challengers to Gainsborough had to meet each other twice. In the end Rotherham won both games comfortably (4-0 and 4-1) to deny their Black Country opponents and overhaul the leaders Gainsborough on the final day of the season to claim their first Midland League title by a single point.

Burslem Port Vale following to late wins enabled them to sneak third place ahead of Wednesbury. At the other end of the table Leicester Fosse ended the season rock bottom, with Derby Junction just above them on goal average. Long Eaton Rangers and Loughborough, who both fell away badly from late February, occupied the places just above Derby Junction.

Frank McGinnis, of Burslem Port Vale, died following a brief illness a short time after the season ended as the top scorer in the Midland League.

Rotherham Town and Gainsborough Trinity each having aspirations to progress into the Football League, it was third-placed Burslem Port Vale who were elected to the Second Division for the 1892-93 season.

At the AGM of the Midland Football League held in May 1892 Rotherham Town were declared the Champions of the League and the Championship Flag was voted to them. Burslem Port Vale and Staveley had withdrawn from the league and applications had been received from Kettering, Derby Town, Mansfield Town, Mansfield Greenhalgh and Matlock Town. The three bottom clubs – Long Eaton Rangers, Derby Junction and Leicester Fosse were re-elected and Mansfield Town and Kettering were also invited to join the league for the following season.

Results Grid

	Burslem Port Vale	Burton Wanderers	Derby Junction	Doncaster Rovers	Gainsborough Trinity	Grantham Rovers	Leicester Fosse	Loughborough	Long Eaton	Rotherham Town	Wednesbury OA
Burslem Port Vale		2-3	5-1	4-0	1-0	3-1	4-0	7-1	5-1	6-3	1-2
Burton Wanderers	4-1		1-3	2-4	2-0	4-1	6-0	1-0	3-0	6-2	1-1
Derby Junction	0-1	2-1		1-2	0-5	3-2	0-0	2-1	0-1	1-2	2-2
Doncaster Junction	3-1	3-1	2-2		0-1	2-0	1-0	0-0	3-1	0-2	4-1
Gainsborough Trinity	3-0	2-1	5-0	0-0		2-1	1-0	1-2	4-3	4-3	2-3
Grantham Rovers	2-0	2-0	2-2	3-0	1-1		2-0	1-0	2-2	2-4	1-1
Leicester Fosse	1-3	1-6	1-0	0-0	0-3	3-1		1-2	0-0	4-1	1-0

Loughborough	1-2	2-3	2-1	11-2	0-5	1-3	6-2		2-0	3-1	5-1
Long Eaton Rangers	2-1	2-2	1-1	1-1	2-5	0-0	5-1	2-0		4-3	2-2
Rotherham Town	4-2	2-0	3-1	2-1	6-1	2-2	11-0	6-1	5-2		4-1
Wednesbury	1-1	3-1	2-0	3-1	6-4	6-2	3-4	5-2	6-1	0-4	

Leicester Fosse Midland League Matches 1891-92

Date	Opposition	Result	Score	Scorers	Attendance	Match Details
12.09.1891	Derby Junction (GR)	W	1 - 0	Atter		Leicester's first-ever league game - staged at the Aylestone-road cricket ground [Grace Road]
10.10.1891	Grantham Rovers (GR)	W	3 - 1	Lord, Webb, Atter /Southwell	2,000	Game was spoiled by heavy rain and long grass
17.10.1891	Burton Wanderers (A)	L	0 - 6	/Holmes (3), Miller (2), Horton	2,000	This win took Burton to the top of the ML.
14.11.1891	Loughborough Town (A)	L	2 - 6	Mouel, Atter / Carnelly (3), Lowe, Freestone, Shelton	3,000	
28.11.1891	Loughborough Town (H)	L	1 - 2	Mouel / Carnelly (2)	2,000	Carnelly scored twice against his former club. Loughborough completed the ML double over Leicester
05.12.1891	Wednesbury Old Athletic (A)	W	4 - 3	Hufton, Mouel, Atter, Webb / Danks (2), Longmore	2,000	Bottom-placed Fosse secured a surprise win over the joint leaders.
19.12.1891	Grantham Rovers (A)	L	0 - 2	/ Pulley, Mulvey		Some newspaper reports state that the final score was 1-2
26.12.1891	Doncaster Rovers (A)	L	0 - 1	/Edwards	1,000	
02.01.1892	Burton Wanderers (H)	L	1 - 6	Bennett/ Horton (4), S Holmes, F Holmes	1,000	Burton's win took them to the top of the ML.
09.01.1892	Rotherham Town (H)	W	4 - 1	Atter (2), Mouel (2) / Oxley	800	
23.01.1892	Long Eaton Rangers (A)	L	1 - 5	Bennett / Saxton (3), Plackett, Osborne		First game at Long Eaton's ground following a FA suspension due to crowd trouble.
30.01.1892	Wednesbury Old Athletic (H)	W	1 - 0	Johnson		Fosse completed the ML double over Wednesbury.
13.02.1892	Gainsborough Trinity (H)	L	0 - 3	/ Cook (2), Cookson		Cookson's goal was scored from the halfway line.
12.03.1892	Derby Junction (A)	D	0 - 0			Field was covered in snow.
19.03.1892	Gainsborough Trinity (A)	L	0 - 1	/ Ward		
02.04.1892	Burslem Port Vale (A)	L	0 - 2			Game was quickly declared void and the league management committee ordered the match to be replayed on 28 April.
09.04.1892	Long Eaton Rangers (H)	D	0 - 0			
16.04.1892	Rotherham Town (A)	L	0 - 11	/ Leather (3), McCormick (3), Cutt (2), Rodgers, Longdon, og		Fosse played only 10 men.
19.04.1892	Burslem Port Vale (H)	L	1 - 3	Bailey / McQueen (2), Dean	4,000	
28.04.1892	Burslem Port Vale (A)	L	0 - 4	/McGuinnis, AN Other	3,000	
30.04.1892	Doncaster Rovers (H)	D	0-0		3,000	Fosse ended the ML season with a run of 8 games without a win to finish in last place,

Loughborough Midland League Matches 1891-92

Date	Opposition	Result	Score	Scorers	Attendance	Match Details
21.09.1891	Burslem Port Vale (A)	L	1-7	/ Mc Guinnis (3), Scarratt (2), Dean	1,500	Four Loughborough players missed the train.
10.10.1891	Doncaster Rovers (H)	W	11-2	Smith (2), Freestone (2), Carnelly (4), Cross, Lowe		Loughborough led 7-0 at half-time.
17.10.1891	Grantham Rovers (H)	L	1-3	Carnelly / Southwell (2), Pulling		
31.10.1891	Gainsborough Trinity (H)	L	0-5	/ Thomas (3), Farmer, Cook		Loughborough's biggest home defeat of the season.
07.11.1891	Long Eaton Rangers (A)	L	0-2	/Hardy, Saxton		
14.11.1891	Leicester Fosse (H)	W	6-2	Carnelly (3), Lowe, Freestone, Shelton	3,000	
28.11.1891	Leicester Fosse (A)	W	2-1	Freestone, Carnelly	1,500	
12.12.1891	Rotherham Town (A)	L	1-6	Freestone / McCormick (2), Croft, Damms, Rodgers, Leather		Loughborough played with only 9 men. Snow fell throughout the game.
19.12.1891	Derby Junction (H)	W	2-1	Lowe, Kelham /Lynch	300	Bottom-placed Derby fielded just 10 men.
26.12.1891	Wednesbury Old Athletic (H)	W	5-1	Smith, Freestone (2), Carnelly (2) / Wilkes	2,000	Wednesbury played with only 10 men. Wednesbury's biggest defeat of the season.
02.01.1892	Gainsborough Trinity (A)	W	2-1	Lowe, Freestone /Thorpe		Gainsborough's first home defeat in the ML since December 1889 (18 games)
09.01.1892	Burton Wanderers (H)	L	2-3	Freestone, Carnelly / S Holmes (2), Millar	1,500	Burton's 3 rd consecutive win in the ML/
23.01.1892	Rotherham Town (H)	W	3-1	Smith, Carnelly (2) / Cutts		This win took Loughborough into 3 rd place.
30.01.1892	Grantham Rovers (A)	L	0-1	/Allen		
06.02.1892	Long Eaton Rangers (H)	W	2-0	Freestone, Farmer	1,000	Farner, signed from Gainsborough scored on his ML Loughborough debut.
13.02.1892	Burton Wanderers (A)	L	0-1	/Miller		This narrow victory kept Burton top of the ML
27.02.1892	Doncaster Rovers (A)	D	0-0			Albert Carnelly broke his left arm in a challenge. The resulting penalty was missed.
12.03.1892	Burslem Port Vale (H)	L	1-2	Freestone / McGinnis, Beats		
19.03.1892	Wednesbury Old Athletic (A)	L	2-5	AN Others / Robson, Longmore, AN Others		
15.04.1892	Derby Junction (A)	L	1-2	Lowe / F Hardy, Riley		