



# Football League Second Division 1897-98

Winner	Burnley (1st title)
Runner-Up	Newcastle United
Wooden Spoon	Loughborough
Promoted	Burnley, Newcastle United
Failed re-election	None
Matches played	240
Goals scored	860 (3.58 per match)
Top goalscorer	Henry Boyd (Newton Heath), 23 [3]
Biggest home win	Manchester City – Burton Swifts 9–0 (16 Apr 1898)
Biggest away win	Loughborough – Gainsborough Trinity 0–5 (5 Feb 1898)
Highest scoring	Burnley – Loughborough 9–3 (28 Mar 1898) Luton Town – Lincoln City 9–3 (18 Dec 1897)
Longest winning run	7 matches; Manchester City (1 Sep 1897 – 16 Oct 1897)
Longest unbeaten run	16 matches; Burnley (30 Oct 1897 – 19 Mar 1898)
Longest losing run	11 matches; Darwen (12 Feb 1898 – 23 Apr 1898) Loughborough (3 Jan 1898 – 8 Apr 1898)

## Football League Second Division 1897-98

		P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Aver	Pts
1	Burnley	30	14	1	0	64	13	6	7	2	16	11	3.333	48[a]
2	Newcastle United	30	14	0	1	43	10	7	3	5	21	22	2.000	45[a]
3	Manchester City	30	10	4	1	45	15	5	5	5	21	21	1.833	39
4	Newton Heath	30	11	2	2	42	10	5	4	6	22	25	1.829	38
5	Woolwich Arsenal	30	10	4	1	41	14	6	1	8	28	35	1.408	37
6	Small Heath	30	11	1	3	37	18	5	3	7	21	32	1.160	36
7	Leicester Fosse	30	8	5	2	26	11	5	2	8	20	24	1.314	33
8	Luton Town[b]	30	10	2	3	50	13	3	2	10	18	37	1.360	30
9	Gainsborough Trinity	30	10	4	1	30	12	2	2	11	20	42	0.926	30
10	Walsall	30	9	3	3	42	15	3	2	10	16	43	1.000	29
11	Blackpool	30	8	4	3	32	15	2	1	12	17	46	0.803	25
12	Grimsby Town	30	9	1	5	44	24	1	3	11	8	38	0.839	24
13	Burton Swifts	30	7	3	5	25	21	1	2	12	13	48	0.551	21
14	Lincoln City	30	6	3	6	27	27	0	2	13	16	55	0.524	17
15	Darwen	30	4	1	10	21	32	2	1	12	10	44	0.408	14
16	Loughborough	30	5	2	8	15	26	1	0	14	9	61	0.276	14

## Election for League Membership

Darwen did not seek Re-Election so the other bottom clubs were required to seek re-election to the League. They were joined in the vote for League membership by 7 non-League clubs.

Votes	Club	End Result
21	Lincoln City	Re-Elected to the League
18	Burslem Port Vale	Elected to the League
16	Loughborough	Re-Elected to the League
15	Darwen	Not Re-Elected to the League
13	New Brighton Tower	Not Elected to the League
3	Nelson	Not Elected to the League
1	Bristol City	Not Elected to the League

Subsequent to the above vote 4 new places became available in the Second Division with the re-organisation of the League. No vote was taken and the following was decided.

Votes	Club	End Result
n/a	Darwen	Now Re-Elected to the League
n/a	Barnsley	Elected to the League
n/a	Glossop New End	Elected to the League
n/s	New Brighton Tower	Elected to the League

## Results Grid

Home \ Away	BLP	BUR	BRS	DRW	GAI	GRI	LEI	LIN	LOU	LUT	MCI	NEW	NWH	SMH	WAL
Blackpool		1-1	2-1	1-0	5-0	1-1	2-1	5-0	4-0	1-0	0-2	2-3	0-1	4-1	1-1
Burnley	5-1		2-0	6-1	1-1	6-0	4-0	2-1	9-3	4-0	3-1	3-0	6-3	4-1	4-1
Burton Swifts	2-1	0-2		2-0	1-1	4-0	2-3	1-1	3-0	2-1	0-0	3-1	0-4	1-3	3-2
Darwen	3-1	0-1	1-2		2-4	1-0	1-2	3-2	2-1	0-2	2-4	1-3	2-3	1-1	1-2
Gainsborough Trinity	4-1	0-0	3-2	3-1		2-0	1-0	4-0	4-0	3-3	1-0	1-3	2-1	0-0	1-1
Grimsby Town	3-0	2-1	7-2	5-0	4-2		0-0	4-2	7-0	1-3	3-4	2-0	1-3	3-1	1-2
Leicester Fosse	4-1	0-1	1-1	0-1	3-1	1-0		3-1	4-0	1-1	0-0	1-1	1-1	2-0	3-1
Lincoln City	3-2	1-1	3-0	2-2	2-1	1-1	1-4		2-3	4-2	2-1	2-3	1-0	1-2	0-2
Loughborough	0-2	0-2	3-2	0-1	0-5	2-1	1-1	4-2		2-0	0-3	0-1	0-0	0-2	2-1
Luton Town	3-1	2-0	1-1	3-0	4-0	6-0	0-1	9-3	7-0		3-0	3-1	2-2	1-2	6-0
Manchester City	3-3	1-1	9-0	5-0	3-0	3-0	2-1	3-1	3-0	2-1		1-1	0-1	3-3	3-2
Newcastle United	2-0	0-1	3-1	1-0	5-2	4-0	4-2	3-0	3-1	4-1	2-0		2-0	4-0	2-1
Newton Heath	4-0	0-0	4-0	3-2	1-0	2-1	2-0	5-0	5-1	1-2	1-1	0-1		3-1	6-0
Small Heath	2-3	2-2	2-1	5-1	4-3	0-2	2-1	4-0	1-0	4-2	0-1	1-0	2-1		6-0
Walsall	6-0	1-2	4-0	5-0	3-0	1-1	2-1	3-1	3-0	5-0	2-2	2-3	1-1	1-2	

Fosse started the 1897-98 season as a Limited Company with a board of directors. Mr Hudson was club chairman, and William Clark, was appointed as club secretary. Formerly of Derby County, Mr Clark was instrumental in promoting in late August an exhibition game of baseball at Walnut Street and a series of 100-yard handicap races for professional footballers. About 2,000 people witnessed Palace beat Derby by 15 to 12 runs with an innings to spare. Only 14 runners competed for the £10 first prize in the handicapped sprint event. Billy Dorrell won the final in a time of 9.45 seconds from fellow Fossil Johnny McMillan, in a run-off after the first race ended in a dead heat. A reshaped Fosse side were Luton Town's first opponents in the Football League, in a 1-1 draw, with William Freebairn scoring Leicester's first goal of the season. In a disappointing start only 2 points were accumulated in the opening 5 games. Encouraging wins at Woolwich Arsenal (3-0) and at home to Blackpool (4-1) sent the Fosse with some confidence to meet their Leicestershire rivals.

Loughborough were as usual in a financial mire. In an attempt to clear their debt, the Loughborough Executive slashed their largest expenditure – player salaries, which was in excess of £1000/year. Out went Hugh Monteith, William Jones, and John Hamilton – who all joined Bristol City and Joseph Blackett to Wolverhampton for £50. They were replaced by William Hodgkin from Castle Donington, Arthur White from Heanor and Arthur Ward from Barrow Rising Star – with the club announcing that local talent would be given a chance. Horace Pike and Arthur Shaw from Nottingham Forest were also signed as the new season approached. Optimism within the club was uncharacteristically high as Shaw scored twice on his home debut, in the 2-1 win against Walsall. However, the fixture failed to fire the enthusiasm of local football fans, which only attracted 1500 spectators. If the public would not come to the ground, then the club decided it should go to the public. Collection boxes were placed in public houses and clubs with some success. However, five consecutive defeats - away at Manchester City (3-0), home to Small Heath (0-2), away at Darwen (2-1), the reverse fixture against Manchester City (0-3) and away at Walsall (0-3), dampened spirits both on and off the pitch. The home game with Manchester City attracted a crowd of 5,000, indicating that the support was there, if the club could provide a team that the town could be proud of. A home win against Luton (2-0), with goals from Walker and Pegg followed by a 3-2 win away at Lincoln, and a narrow defeat away at Small Heath gave the Luffs some hope for the first Derby Day of the season.

A little of the old excitement was infused into the first encounter of the season between Loughborough and the Fosse at the Nottingham Road Ground on 13 November. Upwards of 5,000 people witnessed the game despite the poor form of both sides and the damp surroundings. Many travelled from Leicester, who were firm favourites. The home eleven did not include Godfrey Beardsley, the Luffs' first choice goalkeeper who was suffering from an ankle injury. Kick off took place a minute or two before 2:30, the Loughborough losing the toss and starting towards the Moor Lane goal. Rough tactics were adopted by both sides. Mr Green, the referee, making it known that he would stand none of it and his timely nipping in the bud of foul play had a salutary effect. There was much giving and taking in the first half, without any goals. Perhaps if anything the Fosse had the lion share of the play but struggled to breakdown a resolute Luffs defence. Crossing over at halftime, Loughborough took control and 17 minutes from the restart the great majority of the crowd were "electrified" by a Luff goal. Walker feebly sent the ball in the direction of the home goal and it travelled up to Charlie Saer, in the Fosse goal, who stood waiting very coolly with his legs wide apart and his hands down. Much to the amazement and delight of the home crowd, Saer allowed the greasy ball to roll leisurely between his legs out of his grip into the net. Although such a "muff" as this was enough to take the heart out of the visitors, instead it had the opposite effect as they set about making amends and a determined onslaught on the Luffs goal brought its downfall and the equaliser was scored within 5 minutes. The goal resulted from a goalmouth scrimmage, McLeod skilfully placing the ball over the heads of the defenders and into the net, high out of reach. It was now the turn of the "Fossilised" supporters to cheer and cheer they did. McLeod made other efforts, as the fans chanted "Roddie, Roddie, Roddie" to pop the ball through, but he failed as did other Fossils. Loughborough at the other end were equally unsuccessful, although they were persistent triers, the match ending in well contested draw.

Loughborough secured their first and only double of season in the following fixture, in a 4-2 home win against Lincoln City. The run up to the festive clash with the Fosse at Walnut Street, was dreadful, that included a 7-0 destruction at Grimsby and a 1-0 home defeat to a side that was almost as terrible as they were, Darwen! The local press crucified them. Fosse's form was steady between derby days, drawing at home (1-1) with Newton Heath, followed by victory at Burton Swifts (3-2), completing the double over Arsenal at Walnut Street, a defeat at Manchester City (2-1) and a narrow win at home to Darwen (2-1).

The Fosse-Loughborough game on Christmas Day in 1897 was the only outdoor attraction in Leicester, resulting in an additional £243 to the home club's funds. The game was one sided, with Loughborough being on the defensive for almost the whole game. George Swift won the toss for Leicester and decided to play with the wind. Mumford, Hardy and White defended their lines well. The only goal of the first half was obtained by McMillan after Smith had hit the crossbar. In the second half the Fosse forwards gave an exhibition of football, with goals being scored by Smith, McLeod and Freebairn. The greater part of the latter's goal, however, belonged to Dorrell who went on one of his characteristic sprints up the wing, in which he left Hardy yards behind, centred for the right winger to score when close in front of goal. The defence was the best part of the Loughborough side, with Mumford in goal, putting on a simply outstanding display, his only mistake being when he misjudged a shot by which McLeod scored low down in the corner. Tich Smith was clearly at sea against the combination of Dorrell and McMillan, while most of the forward line showed form of a third-rate club. On the Fosse side, goalkeeper Saer had only three shots to deal with. Swift kicked splendidly, and Walker as in previous games came to the fore. The halves had not difficulty in holding the Loughborough forwards in check, and consequently had plenty of opportunities for supplying their own front line. This they did in good style, allowing McLeod and his fellow forwards to shine. Smith who appeared for the first time since his accident, again showed how difficult it was for an opposing half to rob him of the ball. Dorrell and McMillan made the most effectual wing play, and it was strange that the former, who was by far the best forward on the field, was the only one not to score.

There was a still glimmer of hope for the New Year as the Luffs with Hodgkin, Pike and Pegg scoring won a 3-2 thriller in the final fixture of 1897 at the Athletic Grounds against Burton Swifts. Loughborough then lost 11 consecutive games, including a 7-0 thrashing at Luton Town, and conceding no less than 9 at Burnley. In the last 5 League games of the season, they managed to claim 3 points including a rare win, at home to Grimsby and 9 days later an uninspiring 0-0 draw to Newton Heath at the Athletic Grounds. Perhaps not surprisingly they finished bottom of the League, with the same number of points, 14, from 30 games, but

with an inferior goal average to Darwen. With just 6 wins all season, and just 2 points from 15 away games they scored only 24 goals. Ernest 'Dick' Pegg finished as top scorer in the league with 7, followed by Walker with 4, Roulston and Shaw with 3 each. "Loughburian", the local newspaper football reporter summed up the thoughts of many Luff fans, when he commented, "it was a positive relief to many enthusiasts in Loughborough that the curtain has been rung down on what has probably been the most disastrous season in the history of Loughborough Town Football Club." Little did he know that much worse was to follow!

Loughborough again suffered the humiliation of seeking re-election, along with Lincoln City and Darwen. The other applicants were Burslem Port Vale, Bristol City, Nelson, and New Brighton. At the League meeting held on 21 May 1898 they voted as follows – Lincoln City 21, Burslem Port Vale 18, Loughborough 16, Darwen 15, New Brighton 13, Nelson 3, Bristol City 1. Loughborough were thus elected, by just one vote, along with Lincoln City and Burslem Port Vale. The Second Division was expanded from 16 to 18 clubs and Burnley gaining promotion to the First Division through Test Matches, created three vacancies. At an adjourned meeting of the League, the following week, Glossop, Barnsley, and New Brighton were elected to complete the Second Division for the 1898-99 season.

At the AGM it was announced that Loughborough recorded a loss of about £150 in 1897-98, increasing the club's deficit to £459 6s 4d. They owed £270 12s 11d to the bank. £93 3s 2d to tradesmen and £25 10s 3d to committee and players. The Loughborough Committee were surprised to receive an application from the Fosse for the transfer of their two amateurs, Beardsley, and Bailey. The committee were very strongly of the opinion that if they could prevent the transfers, they would do so. Mr Dormer, a Loughborough Committee member thought it was extremely unkind that the Fosse should wish to lure these two players away. Loughborough also decided to investigate the possibility of forming the club into a company with limited liability.

Fosse's season ended as it started with a series of highs and lows, eventually securing mid-table mediocrity. Prior to the home fixture against lowly Darwen on 5 February 1898, a 440-yard challenge race was staged between Billy Dorrell and visiting half-miler C H Kilpatrick, which the Fosse winger won to claim the £10 prize. Fosse lost the game 0-1, not helped presumably by fielding their tired star player. No less than 6 players were suspended indefinitely by the club for alcohol-related indiscipline and insubordination. Southern League Southampton knocked Fosse out of the English Challenge Cup, the first time the club had been automatically entered into the First Round proper. Fosse's trainer employed "paperchase" as an unusual prematch training session. In a critical review by the press, "...looking back at the past eight months' work of the Fosse Club, one scarcely knows whether to blame the club all round that they are not in the First Division and have not yet won the English Challenge Cup, or to sympathise with them because so many other clubs with the same aspirations have gone one better than they. Certain it is that for the past three seasons the Walnut Street people have made exceedingly little progress as far as the results are concerned. Operations required to convert the club into a limited liability company revealed that the club had been rapidly drifting and all season the directorate had been crippled in their efforts due to a formidable overdraft. The wage bill was close to £60/week. Given the financial status at the start of the season, the results from a playing point of view were by no means bad. A slight improvement had been made in the League as compared to the previous two seasons, 33 points, as against 32 and 30, respectively, but still some way from the 38 points and fourth spot achieved when the Fosse were first elected members of the League. In the League, Fosse played 30, won 13, lost 10, drawn 7: goals for 46, against 35. Walker, Swift and Saer played consistently throughout. Forward deficiency came chiefly from the unreliability of the extreme wings, and the lack of a centre-forward to occupy Smith's place after the latter's serious and prolonged injury. For more than half the season the eleven "carried a passenger", so to speak, in Freebairn. Dorrell did not come up to the standard of previous seasons. McLeod, although openly criticised by supporters and the press, ended the season as top scorer, with 13 League goals. McMillan following with 9, Dorrell 7, Freebairn 4, Smith 4, Smith 4, King 3, Keech 3, Coulson, 1 and Watkins 1, while Dorrell kicked one from the penalty.

**Leicester Fosse Results**

Date	Opposition	Result	Score	Scorer	Attendance
04.09.1897	Luton Town (H)	D	1 - 1	Freebairn	7,000
11.09.1897	Small Heath (A)	L	1 - 2	Smith	3,000
18.09.1897	Grimsby Town (A)	D	0 - 0		3,000
02.10.1897	Newton Heath (A)	L	0 - 2		6,000
09.10.1897	Burnley (H)	L	0 - 1		6,000
16.10.1897	Walsall (H)	W	3 - 1	Smith (2), King	2,500
23.10.1897	Woolwich Arsenal (A)	W	3 - 0	McMillan, McLeod, King	7,000
06.11.1897	Blackpool (H)	W	4 - 1	Freebairn, McLeod (2), McMillan	6,000
13.11.1897	Loughborough (A)	D	1 - 1	McLeod	5,000
20.11.1897	Newton Heath (H)	D	1 - 1	McLeod	1,000
27.11.1897	Burton Swifts (A)	W	3 - 2	Dorrell, Freebairn, Millan	1,000
04.12.1897	Woolwich Arsenal (H)	W	2 - 1	McLeod, Dorrell	4,000
11.12.1897	Manchester City (A)	L	1 - 2	McMillan	9,000
18.12.1897	Darwen (A)	W	2 - 1	McLeod, McMillan	600
25.12.1897	Loughborough (H)	W	4 - 0	Freebairn, McMillan, Smith, McLeod	9,000
08.01.1898	Blackpool (A)	L	1 - 2	Freebairn	3,000
15.01.1898	Burnley (A)	L	0 - 4		3,000
22.01.1898	Newcastle United (A)	L	2 - 4		10,000
29.01.1898	Southampton (A)	L	1 - 2	McLeod	10,000
05.02.1898	Darwen (H)	L	0 - 1		5,000
12.02.1898	Lincoln City (H)	W	3 - 1	Coulson, McLeod, Dorrell	3,000
26.02.1898	Walsall (A)	L	1 - 2	McLeod	2,000
05.03.1898	Lincoln City (A)	W	4 - 1	McLeod, McMillan, Dorrell, Keech	2,000
12.03.1898	Burton Swifts (H)	D	1 - 1	McMillan	5,000
19.03.1898	Gainsborough Trinity (A)	L	0 - 1		2,000
26.03.1898	Small Heath (H)	W	2 - 0	McLeod, Keech	2,000
02.04.1898	Manchester City (H)	D	0 - 0		6,000
08.04.1898	Luton Town (A)	W	1 - 0	Dorrell	4,000
09.04.1898	Newcastle United (H)	D	1 - 1	Dorrell	6,000
11.04.1898	Grimsby Town (H)	W	1 - 0	McMillan	4,000
16.04.1898	Gainsborough Trinity (H)	W	3 - 1	Dorrell, Watkins, Keech	5,000

**Loughborough FC Results**

Date	Opposition	Result	Score	Scorers	Attendance
04.09.1897	Walsall (H)	W	2-1	Shaw (2)	1,500
11.09.1897	Manchester City (A)	L	0-3		9,000
18.09.1897	Small Heath (H)	L	0-2		2,000
25.09.1897	Darwen (A)	L	1-2	Walker	
02.10.1897	Manchester City (H)	L	0-3		5,000
09.10.1897	Walsall (A)	L	0-3		3,000
16.10.1897	Luton Town (H)	W	2-0	Pegg, Walker	
23.10.1897	Lincoln City (A)	W	3-2	Walker, Pegg, Roulston	
06.11.1897	Small Heath (A)	L	0-1		5,000
13.11.1897	Leicester Fosse (A)	D	1-1	Walker	5,000

27.11.1897	Lincoln City (H)	W	4-2	White, Pegg, Pike, OG	1,600
04.12.1897	Grimsby Town (A)	L	0-7		700
18.12.1897	Woolwich Arsenal (H)	L	1-3	Shaw	1,800
25.12.1897	Leicester Fosse (A)	L	0-4		9,000
27.12.1897	Burton Swifts (H)	W	3-2	Hodgkin, Pegg, Pike	2,000
03.01.1898	Newcastle United (A)	L	1-3	Pegg	4,000
06.01.1898	Darwen (H)	L	0-1		1,500
15.01.1898	Luton Town (A)	L	0-7		2,000
22.01.1898	Burnley (H)	L	0-2		2,000
05.02.1898	Gainsborough Trinity (H)	L	0-5		1,000
05.03.1898	Gainsborough Trinity (A)	L	0-4		
19.03.1898	Woolwich Arsenal (A)	L	0-4		5,000
26.03.1898	Blackpool (H)	L	0-2		
28.03.1898	Burnley (A)	L	3-9	Roulston,Pegg (2)	
29.03.1898	Newton Heath (A)	L	1-5	Smith	2,000
08.04.1898	Burton Swifts (A)	L	0-3		
09.04.1898	Grimsby Town (H)	W	2-1	Roulston, Hall	1,500
11.04.1898	Newcastle United (H)	L	0-1		1,200
16.04.1898	Newton Heath (H)	D	0-0		1,200
23.04.1898	Blackpool (A)	L	0-4		300

#### 1897-98 Top Goal Scorers

##### Leicester Fosse

Billy Dorrell	7
Willie Freebairn	5
William Keech	3
Rab King	3

##### Loughborough

Dick Pegg	7
Thomas Walker	4
Arthur Roulston	3
Arthur Shaw	3