

The Southern League.

LUTON v. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	3 goals.
Tottenham Hotspur	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Frail; Lindsay and Williams; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Blessington, Davidson, Moody, and Allsopp.

Tottenham—Clawley; Watson and Erentz; Morris, Hughes, and Jones; Dryburgh, Warner, V. J. Woodward, Cameron, and Chalmers.

Referee, Mr. H. Ward (Nottingham).

When I spoke last week of the meeting of Luton and Tottenham Hotspur providing one of the tit-bits of the season, I little thought what an excellent tit-bit it would be. But as it happened, everything on Saturday proved to be favourable. The weather was delightfully fine, the attendance was the largest for many a long day, the game was a splendid one—the better, of course, because it was always going in Luton's favour—and the result was everything that could be wished.

But while gratified at Luton's victory, it scarcely surpasses the opinion I have held all through the season as to the capabilities of the home team. My view has been that with a good centre-forward Luton could hold their own in almost any company, and the fact that all four matches have been won since Davidson's advent goes far to justify my faith.

Saturday's, of course was the biggest task that had been set the homesters and they came out of the ordeal with flying colours. Tottenham were not quite at full strength, Kirwan, Copeland, and Tait standing out on account of international claims, but probably the Spurs felt very little perturbation on this account, seeing that they were able to fill the vacancies with such men as Chalmers, Cameron, and Erentz.

The winning of the toss meant not a little advantage, in view of the rather strong wind prevailing, and once again Lindsay was successful. The Spurs, however, went away in very promising style from the kick-off, Woodward threading his way through nicely, and the ball going out to the right, Williams gave a corner. Dryburgh placed, but nothing came of it, a foul against the visitors relieving the pressure.

Then Moody and Allsopp did a smart bit of travelling, and from the latter's centre a corner resulted, but the left winger neutralised the advantage by placing badly. Bob Hawkes next threatened danger, followed by Moody and Durrant, and then from a pass by Davidson, the Luton outside-right got in a lovely centre, but the wind took the ball just by the post.

A foul against Blessington relieved from a corner forced by Davidson and Allsopp, but a moment later Durrant put in a centre, and Moody made a brilliant dash, for which he was loudly applauded, and headed in, but Clawley saved. Directly afterwards Bob Hawkes obtained possession and was dribbling right through, but was twice fouled close in. The referee awarded a penalty without a moment's hesitation, and Lindsay taking the kick, scored with a well-directed shot.

This was something to go on with, and put the spectators on excellent terms with themselves. The goal had taken just a quarter-of-an-hour in the getting. Encouraged by their success, the homesters went at it again with renewed energy, and Davidson had hard lines with a grand shot, the ball rebounding off Erentz. A foul against Lindsay, who went for Woodward with more force than politeness, put the Luton defenders on the alert, but Lindsay cleared.

A pretty swinging pass by Davidson to Allsopp enabled the latter to get away, and he wound up with a clipping shot. Clawley saved, but could not get hold of the ball, and Davidson rushing up scored a beautiful goal. Two goals in twenty-five minutes! This was distinctly good, and loud was the cheering which greeted the effort.

The next incident of note was a very deliberate foul by Chalmers on Lindsay, which was promptly penalised by the referee, but feeling was afterwards apparent between the two players, and it took the Luton captain considerably off his play. The homesters continued to have the better of the game, and Clawley was called upon twice in quick succession, the first save of the two being a matter of great difficulty.

Another corner fell to Luton, but Chalmers got away, and after beating Lindsay was bearing down on the home goal when Williams rushed across and put the stopper on in great style. In another attempt, Jones landed the ball on the net, this being Tottenham's first shot at goal up to date. A neat bit of work by Fred Hawkes put Luton on the aggressive again, and Davidson taking a pass from Blessington, sent in a beauty, which Clawley tipped over the bar. Allsopp placed from the corner, and Clawley brought off a wonderful save to a header from Blessington by giving another corner.

giving another corner.

A foul against F. Hawkes relieving, the Spurs went to the other end, and Chalmers again beat Lindsay and gave to Woodward, who had a fine opening, but Bob Hawkes got in the way of the shot and a corner only resulted. Blessington cleared from the kick, but a moment later an extraordinary bit of bungling by Lindsay nearly spelt disaster, Woodward, as a consequence, having the goal at his mercy. The International, however, was a bit flurried and sent wide of the mark, greatly to the relief of the spectators.

The interval arrived with Luton leading by a couple of goals to nil, but the question was whether they would be able to maintain the advantage now they had to face the wind. At first, the Spurs kept the homesters on the defensive, and Chalmers had a very good chance, but shot miserably wide. A moment later the old Watford man received a caution for a nasty foul, the referee's promptitude in dealing with the offence eliciting approving cheers.

Tottenham soon got down again, the ball being trundled along on the left, and Williams going across and trying to clear, headed on to Dryburgh, who had a good opening and threw it away by shooting wide. Then Luton got away, and after Davidson had had a shot, the ball went out to Blessington from a throw-in on the left, and the Luton man delighted the onlookers by scoring a third goal.

Tottenham did not take to their beating, which was now absolutely assured, at all kindly, and their play was characterised by more vigour than science. The more Luton pressed them the more desperate they became, and unfortunately in some cases the desperation was accompanied by a certain amount of viciousness.

At one period, two or three of the players ran great risk of being ordered off the field. It followed upon a beautiful centre by Allsopp, to which Durrant endeavoured to give the finishing touch. In doing this, he came into contact with Clawley, and then there was a "scene," one or two other Tottenham men also chiming in. It was extremely fortunate that the game was in the hands of a strong referee, or things might have taken a very unpleasant turn.

As it was, matters were promptly put right, feeling simmered down, and the last quarter of an hour's play was fought in the best of spirit. Luton continued to have the better of the exchanges, and once or twice came very near adding to their score, but when time was called, the record remained at three to nil in the homesters' favour.

Undoubtedly it was far and away Luton's best performance this season, and it was Tottenham's biggest beating. There was really not a weak spot in the home team, the display all round being very fine. The forwards worked splendidly together, and if there was a best, perhaps the palm should be awarded to Moody, who played a great game. Davidson also was in fine form, and the same may be said of the other three.

The halves were simply splendid, and one scarcely knew which to admire most—the smart and business-like way in which Fred Hawkes kept the Tottenham left wing in check, the smothering process which White administered to Woodward, or the brilliant work put in by Bob Hawkes. It is sufficient to say, perhaps, that although Tottenham had a famous half-back line, it was the Luton trio which took the public eye.

With the exception of a quarter of an hour, when he was decidedly shaky, Lindsay played in his usually strong and reliable way, and Williams performed with wonderful success, his dashing tactics coming off again and again. Frail was not very severely tested in goal, but he did all that was asked of him without causing a moment's anxiety.

As to the visitors, Clawley did his work cleverly, and had no chance against either of the goals, but the backs were rather rocky, Watson being the better of the two. The halves performed well, but the forwards seldom got going. Chalmers was certainly the more prominent of the five, though he generally finished up badly. Woodward, thanks to White, never showed a glimpse of international form, and there was nothing brilliant about any of the others.

The results in the other Southern League matches were as follow:—Southampton 7, Northampton 0; Reading 5, Brentford 0; Swindon 2, Portsmouth 1; Queen's Park Rangers 3, Watford 0; Wellingborough 1, Bristol Rovers 0. The following is the League table up to date:—

					Goals.		
	Plyd.	Wn.	Lt.	Dn.	For.	Agst.	Pts.
Southampton	26	17	1	8	70	16	42
Reading.....	26	17	3	6	69	27	40
Portsmouth.....	23	14	4	5	56	24	33
Bristol Rovers.....	23	12	9	7	43	32	31
Tottenham Hotspur	23	11	5	6	42	22	28
Queen's Park Rangers	23	10	10	5	33	32	25
New Brompton	23	8	8	9	30	33	25
Northampton	24	10	11	4	34	45	21
Millwall.....	23	11	11	1	40	30	23
West Ham United...	23	8	8	7	27	33	23
Swindon Town.....	24	8	11	5	31	41	21
Kettering	25	6	10	9	25	33	21
Luton Town.....	24	7	11	6	32	27	20
Wellingborough.....	24	9	13	2	30	47	20
Watford	27	6	18	3	22	81	15
Brentford.....	26	2	23	1	15	73	5

The gate at the Tottenham match realised £106, the largest sum taken at an ordinary Saturday match for a long time. The collec-

tion for the close season fund amounted to £8 18s.

On Saturday next the Luton team will have to do battle at Canning Town, and we are very much hoping that they will draw, if not win. A good show against West Ham would greatly help the gate the following week.

Special interest attaches to the match on the Town ground on Saturday, for, if the Reserves win—and there is every reason to believe they will—they will be level with the Queen's for the championship of the Beds and District League. Most likely the Reserves and Queen's will have to play an extra game to decide which shall have the cup. Unfortunately, the Reserves have not an open date at home, so the match will probably have to be played at Bedford.

In its "Portrait Gallery," the other day, a Southampton football paper gave a not very up-to-date photo of "Blessington, Luton's International Forward," accompanied by the following notes:—"In the course of nearly thirty years' sojourn in this troublesome world, James Blessington has seen a good deal of 'trekking' since he burst upon the football world as a star of no inconsiderable magnitude. He is a Scotchman, and was born at Linlithgow in 1874. He began playing football when he was sixteen years old, and before he was out of his teens he was rapidly making a name for himself as a clever player. He started with the Old Hibernians, and then went to Leith Athletic. His next club was the Celtic, and with them he remained six seasons, helping the Celts to win the Scottish League four times, the Glasgow Charity Cup, and the Glasgow Cup.

"He has played twice for Scotland against England, and has been capped five times against Ireland, whilst he has twice appeared in inter-League matches. Leaving Celtic, he went to Preston North End, and thence to Derby County, with whom he was severely injured, and during his absence from the field his substitute played so well that he was not displaced. On his recovery Blessington went to Bristol City, for whom he did good service and is now a valued member of the Luton eleven. There is plenty of good football left in him yet, as he is still young as footballers go nowadays."