

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

LUTON v. FULHAM.

A POINTLESS DRAW.

The football season proper opened on Saturday, when the First team entertained Fulham in the Southern League tourney. So far as the weather was concerned, it was an ideal football day, and there was in consequence a very large gate. There could not be less than 4,000 present; the visitors, too, brought a couple of hundred or so with them.

Luton was at full strength, and Fulham also put a strong team in the field. Sergt. Barrow, of Chatham, acted as referee, and the teams lined up as follows:—

Luton: Thompson; Bennett and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Durrant; Eaton, McKee, Storey and Allsopp.

Fulham: Fryer; Turner and Orr; Robotham, Hamilton, and Green; Lawrence, May, Meade, Hunt, and Soar.

Fresh from their excellent stand against Southampton, with whom they managed to draw the previous Saturday, Luton supporters were confident of victory, and although their expectations were perhaps fully justified, Fulham gave them all a surprise. No one imagined that the visitors would go off at such a great pace as they did, and from the commencement it was plainly seen that Luton were not going to have matters all their own way, by any means.

It was a keenly contested game, ending in a pointless draw. Excitement ran high as the leather was taken from one end of the field to the other in quick succession, but the visitors were not often dangerous, and only made a couple or so determined attacks on Luton's citadel.

On the afternoon's play, Luton was decidedly the better team. If there was any fault to be found with the home team it was perhaps that the forwards were not aggressive enough. The quintette, it is true, worked very hard, and showed pretty combination at times, but they were slightly weak in attack. This was one source of weakness. But Fulham suffered to a greater extent from the same complaint. Evidently, to judge from Saturday's play, Fulham is not a team that is likely to do much attacking when pitted against the big clubs, and its tactics on Saturday were practically confined to that of defending.

Fulham showed a good defence, and were not easily overpowered. One other matter—the shooting might have been more accurate. On several occasions, notably when Durrant and Allsopp had the ball, they had a splendid chance of taking the goalkeeper by surprise with a stinging shot, but the erratic shooting lost the point.

This does not necessarily mean that there was no accurate shooting. There was a deal of it, as Fryer had reason to know. To the question, what robbed Luton of victory? the answer must be, the goalkeeper. Fryer saved some wonderful shots, the majority of them very clean, and it was he alone who saved his side from defeat. He not only proved himself capable of keeping out the high shots, but the low ones as well.

Fryer was severely tested, being nearly beaten once or twice. On the other hand Thompson, thanks to McEwen in particular, had but very little to do, but he did it so well that the visitors found him impenetrable.

The game was notable for corners and several fouls. Two or three were given against Storey for fouling Fulham's custodian.

Luton went away at the start, and for the first ten minutes the game was fairly open, Eaton and Durrant being conspicuous on the right wing. McKee, Storey, Eaton, and Durrant all had pops, but were not successful in finding the net, and half-time arrived with a blank scoring sheet.

Although the game had been fast, in opening the second moiety the visitors did not appear to be in the least tired, and both sides went at it again for all they were worth.

Soar made some brilliant dashes, but his partner Hunt did not help him to any material degree. Once Durrant shot a real beauty right across the goal mouth, but Allsopp was too late to convert it. Fred Hawkes also failed, the shot being cleverly taken by Fryer. A foul in favour of Luton enabled the homesters to get close to the railway goal. Fulham's forwards now began to show lack of combination, and Luton pressing vigorously, Orr and Turner had plenty to do. Luton were practically all over their opponents, but although a fair bombardment of the goal was kept up for several minutes, it seemed as if the fates were against Luton in obtaining the coveted goal. A *mélee* took place in front of the Fulham goal, and during the scramble one of the Luton men—McKee, it is understood—headed through, amidst tremendous applause.

The referee, however, disallowed the point, the reason being that the home man was off-side. The spectators took the misfortune with a good grace. No doubt, on account of the bad light, the visitors were put to a greater disadvantage than Luton; but when a miniature shower had passed over they livened up again, and made, as it were, a last onslaught on the home stronghold. At one time Fulham looked dangerously near scoring, but after a couple of corners had been cleared, play was transferred to the other end, and when the whistle blew, Luton were still pressing.

Luton's front line were in good form though Storey did not shine, in my opinion, as well as he might have done. Sammy Eaton played with all the dash of his "Tin-Hat" days. McKee and Durrant were always quick on the ball, and Allsopp played a good game in the second half. Of the trio, Bob Hawkes was, of course, the most dashing. Nothing need be said about the full backs.

As to Fulham, Meade, Soar, and Lawrence did perhaps the most work in the front line. Orr proved himself a sure back. Looking critically at the game, one was reminded that Fulham have the material to make a good team, and they will doubtless give a surprise or two before the season closes.

To-morrow (Saturday) Luton play Millwall away, whilst the Reserves entertain Brighton and Hove in the South-Eastern League.

Up to the present Luton's first team have played two League matches, and have two points credited in their favour, having drawn both games.