

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

LUTON DEFEATED IN THE ENGLISH CUP COMPETITION.

FULHAM'S LUCKY VICTORY.

Luton have lost their first serious match this season, but still they are well up in the Southern League table, and are the only unbeaten team in the South.

It was most unfortunate that Luton had to play Fulham in such shocking weather on Saturday, when these two rival teams met in the English Cup Tie. Not so much from a financial point of view—though the directors will feel this keenly—but more especially in view of the terrible state of the ground. Not only did the Luton men suffer from the disadvantage of playing away from home, but as a team, they cannot be expected to play on a slippery field with the same dash as their London rivals.

When you come to closely look at it, Luton did not do so badly after all. The score against them seems a big one—3 to 1—but in this match, at any rate, the score is no indication whatever of the game.

Firstly, Fulham were decidedly lucky in scoring from two free kicks. If they had not registered points from those two opportunities, it is a moral certainty they would not have got more than one goal during the whole 90 minutes' play.

Then, again, it must be admitted, on all hands that Luton were practically "all over" their opponents in the first moiety. It is true that in the second half they did not do so well, but that was due to the fact that Durrant, who was depended upon to do good work, was practically a cripple. When one takes these facts into consideration, Saturday's defeat is not so hard to explain.

Of course, to go on explaining is not sufficient; it is no use hiding our disappointment at being beaten, because, after all, it is a keen disappointment for all the Town Club's supporters. But, however disappointing, it is by no means discouraging. Though we should all have liked to have seen Luton get through another round we must leave it with Fulham, and concentrate our efforts on maintaining an excellent position in the Southern League table.

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Luton were represented on Saturday by their usual eleven. There was some talk during the week that Storey was to be substituted for Allsopp, but I think the directors were wise in making no alteration just at the last moment, so to speak. Fulham, fresh from a week's training and recreation at Brighton, were of course at the top of their form, but though they had the wind in their favour in the first half, they did not shine to perfection until the second half ; after one or two of the Luton men were "winded."

Speaking about Fulham's visit to Brighton, some seem to think that Luton directors ought to have made a similar move. I do not think it would have made much difference, as our men were in the pink of condition, and were not at all disheartened by their early reverses.

Fulham were the first to attack, and Thompson was soon called upon. Then McKee and Durrant broke away, but were pulled up by Turner. Orr just managed to meet a splendid centre from Durrant, and cleared. A corner to Luton also proved fruitless, and then Soar led the attack on the visitors' stronghold. Lawrence failed to obtain a point, and Luton, in spite of the wind, assumed the aggressive. Holdstock was now conspicuous, and steadily forced the Fulham defence. In the scrimmage, however, the ball went out to Connor and Fletcher. Bob Hawkes fouled, and Orr, taking the kick, placed Fletcher in position, and the leather being passed to Connor, a rather easy goal was scored.

Once more Luton returned to the attack, and were gradually pressing their way along, when Holdstock had the misfortune to foul, and Orr, taking the kick again, sent well into the Luton goal, Lawrence doing the needful with a shot that hit the post and rebounded into the net. As one critic says, Luton went at it with dogged determination, and just before half-time Durrant scored, and when the whistle blew Fulham were leading by 2 goals to 1.

Nothing very brilliant took place in the second half, and for the most part the homesters contented themselves with relying on the defensive. A rush through by Robotham led to that player beating the backs, and scoring the third goal for Fulham.

SOME COMMENTS.

No one could find fault with the Luton men ; they played for all they were worth. Says "Linesman," in the "Morning Leader" :—The Luton team worked on clever lines, and this is the game for the League. It is quite the best Luton team I have ever seen, and though not many goals have been scored, the men may be encouraged to persevere with this style. Durrant was very dangerous until he was put out of court, and of the others Turner struck me as the most effective, though McKee distributed his passes with good judgment. Holdstock, at centre-half, was hardly a success, otherwise the defence was satisfactory, and Bennett again proved himself a grand back. The attendance numbered 9,000.

The "Globe" says :—In the metropolitan area, Fulham were drawn with Luton on the former's ground at Craven Cottage, a landmark hitherto best known in the aquatic racing world. The state of the ground made the play uncertain and fluky, and although Luton had as much of the game as their opponents, Fulham were able to score 3 goals to 1 against. The meteoric career of this new combination has really been the feature of Southern football. They have an enormous following, but, as visiting clubs have found, they are not very impartial, and manifest objectionable signs at any good piece of play on the part of the visitors, or any decision of the referee with which they do not agree. It was a distinctly fast and exciting game ; Luton were handicapped by the injury of their clever outside right, but as a set-off the Fulham back Orr, one of the best men on the field, was temporarily rendered hors de combat.

"Larry Lynx," the sporting writer in the "People," makes a few comments on the match as follows :—"I went to what is almost my home ground to see Fulham entertain (?) and beat Luton. It was a good game, too, as far as the greasy ground would allow, and judging from the state of the "going" here we could imagine what Manchester was like. As to the "footer," the result pleased the enormous crowd—it was a "Ful-lam" throug, guessing by the enthusiasm when the goals were scored. What excitement ! hats, open gamps, or anything handy, were waved for minutes, and here were masses of people squeezed like sardines, and out in the rain to see a football match—sportsmen, eh ! The one man on the ground that I would not have liked to be was the referee, for the onlookers don't suppress their opinion. Truly, linesmen or any other official is unnecessary nowadays—the crowd soon proclaim "Hands !" "Touch !" or a free kick. It is really as much head as football—a professional player must have a chronic headache.

The "Standard" says :—"There was little to choose between the two sides and they were level, when an accident which crippled Luton's outside-right handicapped them somewhat. Fulham, seizing the opportunity, went ahead to an assured and well-deserved victory."