

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NORTHAMPTON.

Just managed to get safely home ! That was, for Luton, the result of their encounter with Northampton on the Bury Park ground on Saturday. The Northants team are generally a good draw at Luton, and the fact that it was Bank Holiday and also that a goodly number journeyed with the visitors, accounted for an excellent gate, the ropes being lined by fully 7,000.

Luton were represented by the usual men. Durrant was brought back, and Storey dropped. The team was therefore :

Thompson ; Bennett and McEwen ; Hawkes, White and R. Hawkes ; Durrant, Eaton, McKee, Turner, and Allsopp.

Northampton : Perkins ; Clark and Murrell ; Neal, Griffiths and Howe ; Frost, Brown, Benbow, McIntyre, and Murray.

Jimmy again won the spin, and set the visitors to defend the Farm goal. For the first quarter of an hour Northampton played with 10 men, Clark, the right back, being late in arriving. The appointed referee (Mr. A. Milward, of Leyton), also failed to put in an appearance, and one of the linesmen (Mr. W. H. London) took charge of the whistle.

The Reds played so pluckily in the opening stages, that when Clark came on the field, I fancied they would test Luton pretty severely. This anticipation was, however, not realised. Luton had most of the game, and were pressing continuously ; whilst Northampton were not more than once dangerous in the first 45 minutes.

Allsopp was first to test Perkins, but the old Luton custodian was in fine form, and he saved easily, as he did also on several subsequent occasions. For fully 10 minutes the visitors were severely pressed, but the alertness of Perkins and the fact that the visitors "packed" their goal when matters looked dangerous for them, saved their citadel from falling.

All the luck that fell to Luton were a number of corners, and these were well placed, but fruitless. As a team the visitors were much taller in stature than the local eleven, and this was of great advantage to them in clearing corner kicks.

The tension was relieved by Murray making a dashing run down the field, and beating Bennett, but he had to be satisfied with forcing a corner, which was got away with some difficulty. Again Luton took up the attack, a shot from Eaton hitting the cross-bar. Next Benbow, who was playing a grand game, broke away, but Northampton were not able to act long on the offensive, and when the whistle blew play was proceeding in the visitors' territory.

Half-time arrived with a blank score.

Both teams played better in the second moiety, but it was easily to be seen that the game was greatly in favour of the home side. Northampton's goal had some narrow escapes, once from Turner, who shot over, and again from Eaton who just missed netting from a corner-kick. There was no doubt that Luton's shooting was once or twice somewhat erratic.

As the game proceeded without anything tangible happening, a good many began to look forward to a pointless draw, when, as usual, the unexpected happened. To my surprise, Luton were awarded a penalty. Strictly speaking, I think we were quite entitled to the point, but considering the simple nature of the foul, this decision appeared strange contrasted with some decisions that marked the early part of the game.

Bob Hawkes took the kick. Perkins came out, but the leather was safely placed in the net, amidst great cheering.

During the remainder of the game, play was at times very exciting, and I was sorry to see some of the Northampton team resort to unworthy tactics. Through the efforts of Frost, Benbow, and Murray, alternately, the visitors broke away, but each found Thompson impregnable.

Nothing further of any note occurred, and so Luton won by one goal to love.

Though Northampton were beaten they certainly were not disgraced. They played a magnificent game, and it is rather surprising to see them at the bottom position in the League table.

Benbow is, of course, their popular favourite, and he is worthy of all the praise they give him. Bob Frost is also a good player, which accounts for his beating McEwen once or twice. Murray makes a third good man in the front line. The half-backs, particularly Griffiths, played a decent game, and the fact that the visitors so ably withstood the determined attacks of Luton show that they have an excellent defence in Clark and Murrell, whilst Perkins did some really clever work between the sticks.

As for Luton, I think it was a mistake to have included Durrant on Saturday. He has not yet recovered from his mishap, and though the plucky outside right is ever ready to turn out for the Town, during the greater part of the game he was almost useless.

I do not desire to imply that he did not put in some good work, but, through no fault of his own, he was not in anything like form. Turner, too, was "off" in the first half, though I noticed he improved in the second. Allsopp did not shine at his best, and was at times disappointing. It may be that he needs a rest.

Once more Eaton played a fine game, and McKee was also in good form. The halves were indomitable, "Bob" and White perhaps being the best of the trio. White played a marvellous game. The backs were safe; Bennett was, as usual, a tower of strength to his side, and McEwen gave indications of getting back into his old form. The little that fell to Thompson's lot was superbly done.