

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. FULHAM.

A DISAPPOINTMENT.

Various estimates have been made of the huge crowd that gathered on the Dallow Farm enclosure on Saturday afternoon to witness the tussle between Luton and Fulham for Southern League honours. While a few have put the gate at 8,000, I should say myself there was nearer 9,000. It was at any rate the largest crowd on record here, and we know for certain that the gate amounted to over £192. Not only was the grand stand crowded, but the several rows of seats erected in front of the stand fully occupied. During the week another stand had been erected on the opposite side of the field, and this, admission to which was at a reduced charge, was also packed. Never before had there been such a crowd round the railings and on the terraces. It was a gate calculated to make the most exacting Director smile.

Taken as a whole last Saturday's match cannot be classed along with some other noted games that have preceded it on the old Bury Park ground. Though the spectators realised the doughtiness of Luton's old opponents, yet the game was not up to the standard that had been expected; indeed, the play was a little disappointing. It may be that the strong wind had its effect in this direction, but that was not wholly responsible for what was only but, a moderate display. For instance, the match with Plymouth Argyle at the opening of the season was far ahead of Saturday's game.

Fulham had the satisfaction of taking a couple of points home with them, but in winning by the only goal of the match I think the proverbial piece of luck followed them.

When we considered the strong, almost impregnable defence which both sides were expected to put on the field, it was not anticipated that the match would be a heavy goal-getting one. The most optimistic could not look forward to a repetition of last season's result of 6-0 for the home side. But the general belief seemed to be that if Luton would not be quite able to "make rings"—(that was the phrase)—round their opponents, they would at least secure the victory. Once more, however, the prophets were wrong, and the proverbial uncertainty of the game was fully exemplified.

It was, however, a piece of good fortune for Fulham to win the toss, as it enabled Fryer to take advantage of the strong breeze which blew very nearly in a line from goal to goal.

Brown had no sooner kicked off than it was apparent that Luton were "game," and would at all costs endeavour to win. Though the elements were against them, Luton commenced and continued to attack vigorously. Fulham's defence was kept on its mettle for a good quarter of an hour. Pickering shot by the post, and later tested Fryer with a dangerous shot, but the visitors' custodian, as we well know, wants some beating. A free against Warner, however, eventually enabled Fulham to take up the aggressive, and Platt had to fist out from Seor.

Once more Luton returned to the attack, and Brown experienced the hardest bit of luck of the afternoon, his well-judged shot hitting the bar and rebounding into play. The visitors' defence was severely tested, and Ross, their right back, put in an extraordinary amount of work. Considering that they had the wind in their favour one expected to see Fulham's defence less troubled, and I casually remarked to the Secretary of the Fulham Club, who witnessed the match from the Press-box, that if his side's defence was no stronger in the second half, Luton's success was practically assured. He eyed me keenly, and observed that Fulham were as resourceful as ever. The sequel proved that he was correct.

Though Luton had perhaps the greater share of the play in the first half, and when the whistle blew for the temporary ceasing of hostilities, there was no score.

The second half was fairly even. Luton had the best of the opening stages, but corner after corner was cleverly negotiated by the visitors. Eventually Fulham broke away. Wood gave Edgley a good opportunity, and the visitors' centre-forward sent in a fast shot, from nearly 20 yards' range, and the ball was safely landed in the corner of the net. It should be noted that practically the only dangerous shot from Fulham took effect.

After this Fulham did not endeavour so much to obtain another goal as they tried to prevent their opponents from drawing level. I have known times when for want of adopting this policy Luton have been defeated.

There was nothing further of very special interest, excepting that Luton still experienced hard luck, and I think a draw would have been a fair result. For class play, I think Fulham showed up best.

Brown was closely watched, Morrison being always on him. Warner, too, was a little weak, but to make matters worse the right wing was poor indeed. Gallacher was the weak spot in Luton's line of attack. The other players gave an entirely satisfactory display, though Blackett was not quite himself once or twice. I wonder what necessity there was for the referee to caution him. McCurdy played a sound, consistent game.