

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

NEW BROMPTON v. LUTON.

Luton did not do so well at New Brompton on Saturday as the majority of their supporters had had reason to anticipate. To go by form, the visiting team should have won hands down, but, as I often remind my friends, form even in football does not count for everything. However, by making a draw of one goal each, Luton did the next best thing, though really they ought to have brought back with them a couple of points.

When one read in a London evening paper something to the effect that Luton might thank their stars that they did not lose, one could not help thinking that the writer of that paragraph must be very prejudiced indeed. But, then, Luton generally gets but scant praise from any of the London evening papers, and what credit we have received has been bestowed grudgingly.

At any rate, here is a lesson for us of the absolute unreliability of form being a true indication of forthcoming results. On their own ground Luton beat last season's champions of the Southern League 7-1, and yet only succeeded in making a draw with New Brompton, who have modestly kept near the bottom of the League this season.

We journeyed to the Kentish town flushed with our success over Bristol. We had an old score to wipe off against the Bromptonians, too. Last season they beat us by 3-0 at home, but lost by 1-0 at Luton.

A large crowd assembled to witness the encounter, and when their favourites opened the attack, the spectators did not fail to give expression to their enthusiasm. The game had not been in progress more than a few minutes when Beadsworth, the old Swindon Town player, sent over the bar. The venue of play was, however, soon changed, and Griffiths, the home custodian, was well tested with a shot from Pickering. Luton continued to attack, and Barnes sent in a magnificent shot. It was a brilliant piece of work, and deserved to have been successful. The homesters were lucky indeed. Burns and Sheridan made a nice run on the wing for Brompton, but met with too strong a defence.

There could be no doubt that play was a little one-sided, and there could also be no doubt as to which side had the advantage. Luton was easily having most of the play, but the forwards were not doing so well, and the shooting, too, was not all that could be desired. Marriott brought relief to his side, and sent in the first dangerous shot which Platt had to negotiate. In saving the visiting goal-keeper had to concede a corner, but nothing resulted from the flag-kick, and so half-time arrived with a blank score. Yet, considering that they had the advantage of a strong wind, I think Luton should at any rate have been a couple of goals up before they had to cross over.

The homsters opened the attack upon resuming, and Beadsworth and Sheridan were particularly aggressive. With a flyer across the goal mouth, Burns came very close to scoring. Eventually, however, Marriott broke through, and 12 minutes from the restart opened the scoring for New Brompton amidst the keenest excitement.

Having gained this advantage, the home side adopted the tactics of playing the one-back game, with the result that though Luton made desperate efforts to equalise, they were being constantly pulled up for offside. Play became faster, and a quarter-of-an-hour from the close Brown secured the equalising goal. The homesters strongly appealed for offside, but the referee allowed the point.

Even then, on the play, New Brompton ought to have again obtained the lead. Snelgrove missed the easiest of chances, and though several shots were sent in, Platt saved them all, and so the game ended in a draw of one goal each.

It was by no means a great game. Play all through was only of the average. The ground being very "bumpy" was a handicap to the visitors, who all the same ought to have secured the upper hand in the first moiety.