

FOOTBALL.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

AN EVEN STRUGGLE.

Played at Norwich on Saturday. Result:—

LUTON	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 GOAL
NORWICH CITY	...	...	...	...	...	...	1 GOAL

Teams:—

Luton: Platt; McCurdy and Blackett; R. Hawkes, White and F. Hawkes; Barnes, Pickering, Brown, McDonald, and Warner.

Norwich City: Williams; Archer and McEwen; Livingstone, Bushell, and Bemment; Muir, Graham, Ronaldson, Ross and Brown.

Referee—Mr. J. Plaistow (Grimsby).

There was for this match a record attendance of between 8,000 and 9,000 when McEwen won the toss and set Luton to face the wind. Play opened in midfield, neither side being able to claim any advantage, and the initial exchanges were a little uninteresting. A passing movement, together with the taking advantage of some mistakes, brought Luton within reach, but White banged behind.

At the other end Archer kicked the ball on to the toes of Warner, who immediately sent the ball flying over the goal. Neither side had yet been able to claim any superiority, although the Canaries had settled down to good combination by this time, whereas the visitors had not yet got into their stride. A corner against Luton was followed by a centre by Muir, which Graham's head only missed by an inch right in the goal mouth.

A miskick by White let the Babes through again, and Brown's turn of speed took him past Blackett, where he sent in a stinging shot which Platt punched out. Another mistake, this time by Blackett, brought Norwich into the area of the Luton goal again. For a time the City pressed hard, but their efforts lacked the finish necessary for them to score, while the visitors were prone to tapping the ball on to the feet of their opponents. Once or twice they dashed away, but this lack of care in the matter of passing gently ended in one of the home team's splendid defenders transferring play to the other half of the field.

The Luton backs, too, showed a tendency towards kicking wildly, so that the ball landed well out of the reach of their own forwards. The slight superiority of the Norwich attack before goal was chiefly due to Brown, and a capital centre of his was received by Ronaldson, from whom Platt saved well. From a corner-kick "Sandy Brown led the Luton front string towards the other goal, but the sturdy kicking of Archer put a finish to their efforts, and Bemment sent the ball travelling over the cross-bar.

A good clearance by McCurdy set Barnes on the go, but he found his centre nullified by Archer just in time. Luton returned, and Warner struck the opposite post with the finest shot of the match. Had it been an inch inside the goal Williams would have had no chance with it. Norwich took up the running again, and Brown took advantage of an excellent centre to send in a hot grounder, which Platt excellently saved. Ross returned, but McCurdy cleared.

created.

The first opening of the match was lost. "Sandy" Brown got through well and attempted to baffle Williams, but in so doing sent the ball on to the post. A well-placed flag-kick by Warner was punched away by the goalie, and just before half-time Archer fouled within the penalty area. Blackett took the kick, and landed the ball in the net. The first period ended with Luton leading by the single goal, after even play.

As the thick fog was beginning to settle it was decided to continue without any interval, and play was opened with Luton showing a more earnest style. During the initial stages they were a little the better team, but their kicking was still rather wild and their combination uncertain. A trial of the triangular style of passing—from halves to wings—seemed to have the most effect upon the "Babes" defence, but their shooting was not of the high quality which the forwards have several times this season showed themselves to be capable of.

A capital centre by Warner travelled out to the opposite wing, where Barnes spoilt a good effort by playing a waiting game. Brown, of Norwich, put in a lengthy run, but was pulled up by Blackett before he got within shooting distance. At this point Luton were showing themselves the better team, and the danger of their pressure was so apparent that the crowd began to shout encouragement to their team.

Platt saved a fast grounder from Ronaldson in good style, and a well-judged centre by Muir was headed away by White. Twenty-five minutes from time Ronaldson was making tracks for the goal when he went sprawling. There were a number of the Luton men close by, and although neither touched the man the referee awarded a penalty, apparently against "Bob" Hawkes, who was nearest of all. Archer took the kick, and scored amidst a scene of the greatest excitement among the crowd.

This equaliser livened play up considerably. Ronaldson sent the ball against Platt's legs with only him to beat, and a stiff fight to obtain the lead followed. Luton showed to advantage, for they now for the first time gave the crowd a few glimpses of their old form, and several times extended the backs and goalie to the utmost. But, in spite of all their efforts, neither side could penetrate either defence, and an even game resulted in a draw of one goal each.

The result is the best representation of the play which can be imagined. Neither side could show superiority for any length of time. Luton's form was much better than that of the previous week, but was not equal to that of the earlier games this season. The combination will bear improvement, and the kicking of the defence showed more of strength than calculation. The players all were in fairly good fettle and worked well, though no one was particularly brilliant. Norwich City is a well-balanced team, and should go far in this season's League competitions.