

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

SOUTHAMPTON v. LUTON.

The expected again happened at Southampton on Saturday, when the Saints won by 2 goals to 1. Though this was not a performance to be ashamed of, the visitors experienced a little bit of hard luck in not at least making a draw of it. At half-time the score was one goal each, and when the glad news was flashed to the ground at Luton no little satisfaction was felt. The equalising goal was, however, rather easily obtained, and was rather due to an error of judgment on the part of Clawley. When the final result came through the feeling was that the "Blues" had not, at any rate, done so badly away from home.

Owing to the changes that had to be made in Luton's forward string, it was not expected that the team would be sufficiently strong to successfully battle against Southampton. In consequence of last week's injury to Warner, Gallacher took his place, and Pickering was also dropped for Dobson. There were one or two changes on the other side, but they were to the Saints' advantage. After an absence of six weeks, Harrison turned out for them. Hedley took the place of Saye, while Brown and Meston took the places of Jeffries and Edmunds respectively.

The following were the teams.—

Southampton: Clawley; Clarke and Harts-horne; Lee, Hogg, and Meston; Tomlinson, Hedley, Harrison, Brown, and Moucher.

Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Gallacher, McDonald, Brown, E. Dobson, and Barnes.

Southampton won the spin, and immediately assumed the aggressive, their first success being a corner forced by Moucher. This proved unproductive, as did also Platt's fast low shot which followed not long after. But the Saints were out to win, and, keeping up the pressure, Moucher came within an ace of scoring with a very fine cross shot, which Platt with difficulty cleared. Saintly aggression was, however, rewarded, for Brown scored with a capital shot.

This reverse acted like an electric shock on the Luton men, who threateningly approached Clawley, only to be driven back in consequence of an offside infringement. When Tomlinson had made a fine effort to beat Platt, Luton got within shooting range, and Blackett placed wide. Through a fine run by Tomlinson, Moucher had two capital openings. From the first he hit the cross-bar, while on the second occasion, standing three yards from Platt, he put over. Twice did the Luton left wing make gallant sprints down their wing, and the second time Clawley made a magnificent clearance from Brown.

Almost immediately McDonald outwitted Clarke, and scored the equalising goal with a very tame shot, which Clawley must have saved had he not miskicked. At the other end Hedley, from Moucher's centre, headed into Platt's hands. From now to half-time the Saints were constantly attacking, but the score at half-time was one all.

Southampton again took up the reins when the second half started. When they got within range of Platt, however, Moucher was given offside. Then Platt cleared cleverly after Brown and Harrison had made a pretty combined run. Lee quickly returned the ball to the Luton goal-mouth, where Platt was temporarily disabled. He quickly resumed his place between the posts, and saw Hedley miss a glorious opening. Moucher, tricking Blackett, gave Brown a splendid opening, which he all but turned to account. His namesake, "Sandy" Brown, was quickly at the other end, where he missed an open goal.

Then the Saints once again carried play into their opponents' territory, where Hedley, receiving from Moucher, scored, only, however, to have the point disallowed for offside. Hedley the next minute made a grand effort to score, but Platt saved his shot in first-rate style. Southampton had practically monopolised the play during this half, but their shooting was faulty, and the Luton defenders had proved of plucky and persistent calibre. From a corner taken just before the close, Harrison headed through, while Meston again netted the ball after his comrade Brown had been given offside.

Taken all through it was a good game, the Saints perhaps having the best of it. It was satisfactory to note that Luton did their best, but the fact was "things did not come off," as they sometimes do. We remember our visit to Southampton last season was followed with more disastrous results, when the Saints proved victorious by 4-1, while at Luton they again beat us 2-1.

Luton is now seventh from the top of the League, just one below last season's champions, Bristol Rovers. There is all the appearance of there being a tight fight for premier position this year. Fulham are well at the top, but on games played Tottenham have them well in hand. Both Southampton and Plymouth follow close on the heels of the London clubs.