

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NEW BROMPTON.

A ROUGH GAME.

In just getting home on Saturday Luton did nothing to be very proud of—in fact, during the closing stages of the game the best hope that could be held out for the Blues was that they might have to divide the points. One has some difficulty in imagining why the rank and file should have expected Luton to give New Brompton such a thrashing on their visit to "Strawopolis," but this seems to have been the general idea abroad. Possibly it was because the visitors stand almost at the bottom of the League; but it did not take one long to recognise that the home side were going to have matters anything but all their own way. From the display which they gave on Saturday New Brompton are better than many teams in the League, and one can only think that our opponents of last week have had a deal of ill-luck.

Luton won their game through a penalty. But New Brompton gave them a stiff fight, and on the whole there was but little to choose between the teams. As a matter of fact, during the last quarter of an hour the home side were terribly pressed, and the defence all but broke down before the rushing tactics of the visitors, who came within an ace of scoring on more than one occasion. Though it was gratifying to see the Blues bag two points, had the result been a draw there were few who could have reasonably been dissatisfied.

One of the chief characteristics of the game, particularly in the second moiety, was its roughness. It is doubtful if there has been a rougher game played at Luton for two or three seasons. It commenced with the visitors—Floyd, their left back, being the first to start doubtful play in his dealings with Warner. He went deliberately for the Luton man time after time, and the spectators showed disapproval of his conduct; and when in a tussle with his opponent he came off worst, there was anything but sympathy shown for him. Even this check did not bring him to his senses, for subsequently he was at his old dodges, which was the cause of Warner being unmoved towards the close of the game. The most charitable construction that can be put upon his conduct was that Floyd completely lost his self-control. One or two of the other side exhibited a similar tendency, and it was only to be expected that Luton would try and "get one in" now and again, so that on the whole the game was far from being an enjoyable one. We do not want to see one of its kind again.

The referee also gave considerable latitude to the players, but what the spectators had to complain about Mr. Fallowfield was his decisions in regard to the offside rule. One could scarcely believe that it was our old friend who had charge of the whistle, because we know his ability as a referee. On Saturday, however, he seemed to be at sea, and his decisions as to offside were frequently "rank." The most violent partisan recognised that fact. The spectators also groaned, and were cautioned; but, like good sportsmen, they kept their heads. It must not be inferred that Mr. Fallowfield favoured one side or the other, because he treated both with equal impartiality; it was in regard to his offside decisions and a few fouls that created the discontent. On the whole the game was not at all a satisfactory one.

Luton were the first to score through Brown, who once more found his place in the team. After the visitors, who won the toss and kicked with the wind, had tried conclusions, Barnes transferred play, and soon from a centre by F. Hawkes, Luton's centre headed past Martin, the visitors' custodian. New Brompton went boldly for their opponents, and their efforts were soon rewarded. Marvin, the centre half, obtained an opening and shot for goal. The leather went off White, and Platt in trying to save slipped, and the visitors had drawn level. Nothing more was scored up to half time.

The ground had by now almost become a quagmire, but New Brompton set the pace, and Luton very pluckily responded. It is doubtful if the blues have ever played a faster game on such a greasy turf. Play continued fairly even, both ends being alternately visited, the usual "hard lines" being experienced on nearly every occasion.

At last Luton obtained a penalty, Walton accidentally fouling Pickering, whose shots several times just missed, and who would now have undoubtedly scored had he not been brought down. Brown took the shot and scored; but what a lucky bit of business for Luton! In going into the net the ball actually grazed the cross-bar. A couple of inches higher, and the opportunity would have been lost. So that successful effort must be put down to a bit of luck rather than to any great amount of judgment.

This was exactly the result when the whistle blew, so that Luton won by 2-1. The closing stages saw New Brompton putting forth a stupendous effort, and if fortune had favoured them perhaps they would have carried a point home with them.

Luton played a good game, a remark that equally applies to the other side. Barnfather, who was dropped earlier in the season, and who has since wanted to come to Luton, was about the best forward on the field; though the fact that he was able to shine so conspicuously was due to the absence of R. Hawkes, who was playing for the Reserves in the Beds Cup competition. Gallacher was able to do but very little with the New Brompton man. F. Hawkes, who was unfortunate to sprain his ankle in the first half, had to leave the field for a time, and towards the end of the second half he was not able to do a great deal, though he braved it to the last.

Result: Luton, 2; New Brompton 1.