

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. NORWICH.

It is said that victory will cover a multitude of mistakes, and practically the only satisfaction which local enthusiasts of the game can gain from Saturday's match with Norwich is that, after all, the Blues managed to win. The almost countless chances which the home forwards missed during the first half were disheartening; and they were generally due to erratic shooting. On the play and the many opportunities which they had, Luton ought to have been at least three goals up in the first moiety, instead of one. The ball was either sent "miles" over the bar, or yards behind the uprights. The tactics of the visitors' right back (Archer) on one or two occasions were doubtful, and by being denied a penalty or two, Luton were not awarded their just dues.

In the second half, play was much more even, and indeed the Canaries for a time held the upper hand. This was not due to the break-neck pace of the first 45 minutes, because though play had been fairly fast, it was by no means exceptionally so—but this result, in my opinion, was due to the gradual collapse of the pivot in the forward line. Norwich really deserved to equalise, which they did with a splendid shot from Luton's old player, Ross. It being only then about six minutes to time, naturally all concluded that the match would result in a draw. And at this no one could have had cause for complaint, seeing the many chances Luton had frittered away. But just the unexpected happened, and very unexpected it was, too. About a minute to time a penalty was given to Luton, from which they easily regained the lead.

Considering what had gone before it, Archer's foul on Barnes was a very paltry one, and it was done at a position from which the local man could scarcely have scored. As a matter of fact, play had to be stopped, so that Luton might have the penalty kick, another evidence of weak refereeing. Of course "Bob" gave the visiting custodian no chance, but, all the same, it was rough luck on Norwich.

When Luton met the Norfolk men at Norwich previously this season, the result was a draw, but there were but few of the five thousand spectators gathered on the Ivy-road ground on Saturday, but who favoured the home side. When the Norwich captain took the ground, he met with a great ovation. McEwen always had many admirers at Luton.

The teams were as follows:—

Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; Fred Hawkes, White, and Bob Hawkes; Warner, Macdonald, Dobson, Pickering, and Barnes.

Norwich: Williams; Archer and McEwen; Livingstone, Bushell, and Bement; Muir, Wood, Ronaldson, Ross, and Brindley.

It will be seen that Dobson replaced Brown in the home quintette, and I am told that the reason for this change was that it was expected the amateur would do very well on the dry turf. The conditions were ideal. "Punch" won the spin, and set Luton to play against a resplendent sun. The home forwards were not long in getting away, and Dobson getting round McEwen, shot and sent over the bar. Then Pickering tried a shot, with a like result. The visitors then took up the running, and Ronaldson sent in a soft shot, which was easily cleared by Platt. Luton were now getting into their stride, and displaying excellent combination, worked their way into dangerous quarters, until the movement was spoilt by Warner lying offside. The pressure, however, was kept up, though the ball was often sent too high over the bar. Their efforts were at last crowned with success, for Bob Hawkes dribbled the ball down the field, finally passing to Dobson, who scored with a fine drive.

Luton, after this, had most of the play, and it was only at brief and rare intervals that the visitors could get near goal. Hawkes, the captain, tested Williams with a grand shot, while another from Pickering was equally well saved by the Norwich goal-keeper. Half time arrived with Luton leading by 1 goal.

On resuming, the Blues immediately resumed the aggressive, and McEwen twice stopped the dangerous rushes of the home forwards. Then the play was transferred, and the Luton goal almost fell before a fine shot by Wood. After smart play by the home forwards, the home captain banged the ball goalwards, only to see the shot intercepted by one of his own men. Play was much less interesting than in the first half, though, as time went on, interest began to revive. Williams was twice called upon to save, which he did in excellent fashion. Norwich got well into line, and Ronaldson shot, but Platt saved. In the Norwich goal an exciting scrimmage came to an end when Williams finally got hold of the ball, and cleared. Bob Hawkes was always prominent with excellent work. From his position at left half he was in evidence in all departments of the field. Blackett, also, was in fine form, and kept the visitors well in check. Towards the finish play became tame and uninteresting, the shooting being especially poor. Before the close, Ross equalised for Norwich.

Towards the finish Barnes got away, and a tussle between the Luton wing man and Archer took place almost on the goal line. The linesman raised his flag and pointed for a penalty, but evidently the referee did not see it; for he beckoned to kick off in the usual way. Then he stopped play and gave a penalty. The shot was taken by R. Hawkes, who had no difficulty in beating Williams. The homesters thus won by 2 goals to 1.

The game was by no means over-interesting. Blackett was in tip-top form, and on the day was decidedly the best back on the field. McEwen was not in his usual form, but his cool head and tricky play made up for any deficiency in other respects. In the second half he played much better. It was the form of the halves that had the greatest bearing on the result of the match. Luton's halves were exceptionally strong, particularly in regard to the captain and his namesake. The visitors' trio were very weak, which was the reason why the home forwards were so often on the attack. The front lines were fairly equal, only the Norwich men were seldom dangerous. Ross is as fine a man as ever. Dobson played very well in the first moiety, but there is a suspicion that he cannot stay the pace of a second 45 minutes. At least he did not do so on Saturday, though his play, taken all through, must have given satisfaction. Warner has not been well for some

weeks ; otherwise McEwen would not have had things so much his own way. This reminds me of a strange phase of the game. On Saturday it was "Dirty Mac," whenever the old Luton player did any of those neat little "tricks" of his. When he was in the habit of doing the same for Luton, he was applauded to the skies ! Such is "sport."