

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

THE "BLUES' " GREAT WIN.

The score on the Ivy-road enclosure on Saturday afternoon bordered on the sensational, when Luton gave Southampton a severe trouncing, winning by the margin of five clear goals. The Blues had something to wipe off the slate, and they did it magnificently. But, all the same, it must be confessed that the Saints are not the team of past years. On both occasions last season they beat us easily—at Luton 2-1, and at Southampton 4-1; while last December, on their own ground, the Saints won by the odd goal, the score being 2-1.

The conditions on Saturday were ideal, save for a blustering cross wind, which really was of little disadvantage to either side. The turf was in the pink of condition, and just suited Luton. The teams were:

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

Southampton: Clawley; Clarke and Warner; Meston, Lee, and Houlker; Tomlinson, Jefferies, Hedley, Harris and Moucher.

Mr. B. Case, of Birkenhead, had charge of the whistle.

Luton won the spin, and Bob Hawkes set Southampton to defend the railway goal. No sooner had Hedley kicked off than the home side attacked. In the first minute of the game, R. Hawkes sent in a long range shot, which beat Clawley hopelessly. This early success promised to be added to, as the Luton forwards played in splendid style, and gave no evidence of end-of-season form. A good shot by Pickering was well saved by Clawley, and, a moment later, another from Barnes was cleverly countered. Southampton then settled down, but they had not gone far over the centre line when R. Howkes cleared, and placed the ball to his forwards. A spirited run followed, but Warner ended by sending wide.

At the other end, Tomlinson attempted to beat the defence single-handed, but he was defeated by Blackett, and in a very short time the Luton front line was again busy. A rasping shot from R. Hawkes almost took Clawley by surprise, and he had no sooner saved than the ball came in from Warner. This time, however, it was Clarke who saved—a save that was rather lucky. Southampton were now having a larger share in the game, but the Luton defence proved very sound, and after a prolonged tussle for superiority, the visitors had to admit defeat. Luton were awarded a free kick, and this was so well placed by McCurdy, that Brown had little difficulty in putting his side 2 up.

After the Saints had shown a glimpse of their best form, they deteriorated again, and up to the interval were confined within their own lines. Luton, however, were unable to add to their score, and crossed over leading by 2 goals to 0.

The pace had been so fast in the first moiety, that when the game was resumed play for a time was rather uninteresting. Eventually, however, Luton livened up, and the forwards were making tracks for goal. Brown had a pop, but the custodian easily saved, though he was kept busy after this, and only cleared a difficult situation at the expense of a corner. Clawley had a great deal to do, but he succeeded in keeping Luton out, and then Lee enabled his side to get away.

But the Saints did not remain in the home-sters' territory a great while, and play had not been long transferred ere Pickering succeeded in scoring from a centre by Barnes. The ultimate result was now placed beyond doubt. Undaunted at this heavy reverse, the visitors played with more energy. The forwards were aggressive, but completely failed to penetrate the Luton defence. The only advantage accruing to the Saints were a couple of fruitless corners. Once when they seemed particularly dangerous Blackett stepped in and cleared.

The Luton right carried the ball right down the field, where Warner forced a corner. Following this Brown got the ball into the net, but the point was ruled offside. Luton again attacked, and Clawley was lucky in turning aside a shot from Pickering. After Luton had gained a fruitless corner Warner broke through and scored a fourth point, and shortly after Pickering steered the ball past Clawley for a fifth goal. The Saints, to all appearances, were badly beaten, and in the closing stages devoted their energies to keeping down the score. They succeeded in doing this, the whistle sounding for time with Luton easy winners by 5 goals to 0.

Luton's huge score must not, however, be taken as a true indication of the game, which was not so one-sided as the score would seem to suggest. True, Luton were the better team, but the occasional factor entered very largely into the match—the Blues could do nothing wrong, while the Saints could do nothing right. For once every man on the home side played to win, and Luton's powerful defence had something to do with the result. Tomlinson's centres were always beautifully put in, and dangerous withal; but the home backs—true, in a tight corner once or twice—never faltered. For at least one goal, if not two, the backs deceived Clawley, though against that must be put the instance when Clarke robbed Warner of a certain goal. Lee gave a splendid exhibition.

On the home side it is not easy to pick out any players for special mention. "Bob" has scarcely ever played such a fine game. He was not only everywhere, but he was doing everything, and won the praise of some of the Saints' directors who were present. "We have never seen a better half," they declared. McCurdy shone in the first half, and "Joe" was in top form throughout. The defence was so strong that Platt had seldom anything difficult to do. Macdonald played better than he has done for some time, and Warner was not "starved" so much as usual. Pickering richly deserved his success in scoring. Brown made some pretty openings for his men, while "Billy" was always a trouble to Clarke. Freddy Hawkes showed better form, but White was not able to hold his own against Hedley.

Taken all through, it was a fine game, and clean, too. Many critics declare it was the best game of the season; but I still think that the first game on the new ground, when Plymouth Argyle were here, was after all the finest display of football we have seen at Strawopolis for a long time.

From 17th place last season, Luton will at least finish up fourth, with the possibility of being third. Naturally the supporters of the Town are jubilant, and the directors should have no anxiety now in regard to the close season fund.

On Saturday a collection was made during the interval as a present to Freddy White on the occasion of his marriage. White has done yeoman service for his team, and though, as some may say, our centre-half position is not as strong as it should be, White has not only been useful, but in one sense has been almost indispensable. Naturally "Freddy" is popular with local enthusiasts of the game, and on Saturday they subscribed a handsome sum of 10 guineas as a mark of appreciation.