

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

FULHAM v. LUTON.

With three alterations in their team, Luton did very well at Fulham on Saturday, the match ending in a draw of no score. It is some time since Luton secured a point from the Fulhamites. Last season they beat us on both occasions—3-0 at Craven Cottage, and 1-0 at home at Luton. In view of the Straw-plaiters' poor performance against Queen's Park, and especially at Brighton, it was only natural that the London spectators were confident of the success of their favourites. But scarcely any pastime has its possibilities like football, and once more the prophets were nonplussed at the result. Luton's performance was a very creditable one—they rose to the occasion right nobly, and on the play ought to have won. The visiting supporters went to London, it must be confessed, not a little downhearted, but they returned jubilant.

The three alterations made in the Luton team were at back, centre-half, and on the forward right wing. Jackson replaced Hogg at left back, and played with consummate skill and ability. For the first quarter of an hour he took things easily, but he was very conspicuous during the rest of the game. Whatever happens, Jackson, on Saturday's form, must retain his place, unless it is on heavy ground. It is there that perhaps Hogg will shine. Luton cannot afford to play two slow backs. On a dry ground the Middlesbrough man is slower than McCurdy, and not so reliable. In the mud Hogg ought to do well, and under these circumstances should be a source of strength to his team.

It was thought desirable to leave Jones out of the centre-half position on Saturday, the belief being that against Fulham Freddy White would better appreciate the play of his partners, and would therefore do better. It so happened that both R. Hawkes and his namesake Fred had returned to their old form, with the result that the half line did very well indeed. In fact, it was the halves all through who were dangerous, and their worthy endeavours should have met with better success.

In the forward line Alf Warner was put inside right to Schofield on the wing. This completed the alterations from the previous week. It is in regard to the forwards that one has perhaps to be most critical—they were the weak point in the team. The right wing did not appear to get on very well at all, and Sandy did not exert himself over much. It was owing to the rather unusual weakness of the front string that Fulham succeeded in making a draw. Of course, in this connection one has to take into account the prowess of Fryer, the home custodian, than whom there is no better goalkeeper in the South. Ross and Thorpe, the Fulham backs, did not shine so well, but Fryer's performance was a great one.

Fulham's captain won the toss, and with it the advantage of having a rather strong sun behind them. The opening exchanges were very exciting. Hamilton just failed to get to a fine forward pass from Wheatcroft before Jackson sent it back again. Collins was early conspicuous for some fine tackling against Pickering and Barnes. Bell forced McCurdy to concede a corner, but it was nicely got away by Jackson. Fulham now got into their stride, and some very fine touches between Hamilton and Edgley carried the game into Luton's quarters, where another corner fell to them. This was sent behind by Bell, and from the goal kick Brown and Warner went well away. Pickering was entrusted with the final shot, but sent wide.

Hamilton, who was feeding his wings admirably, gave Bell a lovely pass, but he was fouled when close in. The free-kick was taken by Ross, who sent in a terrific drive, which Platt, by diving at full length, just managed to shove behind. Then followed a hot time for Luton, and McCurdy and Jackson, with White, did some great things in keeping their lines clear. Threlfall put in a clinking centre when pressed by Jackson, and Edgley caused a gasp by just missing the top corner of the net.

At length the Luton front string got away, and R. Hawkes, cleverly beating Goldie and Ross, tested Fryer with a hot, low drive, which was nicely saved, and got away. Luton had now livened up, and the game was very even. Morrison stopped Brown and gave out to Threlfall, who sent in a beauty which Platt did well to get away. A moment later the Luton goalkeeper punched a hot one away from Morrison. Luton, mainly to the fine wing passing of Barnes and Pickering, got well into Fulham's territory. Fryer had to fust away two good shots in quick succession, and Ross got in front of a stinger from White. Luton were now pressing, and Fulham's defence was taxed to its utmost. Relief came at last by Bell running almost the length of the ground. Some exciting incidents between Hawkes and Edgley took place, and then Threlfall received when almost alone on the left.

The feature of the play, it may be noted, had been Bell's grand sprints along the line, and his nicely-timed centres. R. Hawkes, with a good overhead kick, set Pickering and Barnes going again, and Morrison nipped in just in time to head away. A fine opportunity in the centre was muddled by Hamilton, who had in this half earned a poor opinion from the crowd by reason of his many mistakes. A race away by Schofield was nicely stopped by Thorpe, and half-time came with a blank sheet.

Says a critic: "Fulham had been the Fulham of old. Clever in midfield, excellent in defence, but very weak in front of goal. A good many wild passes by the champions had been also snapped up and used against them. For Luton R. Hawkes was the outstanding feature, and indeed his display was brilliant."

The second half opened with a nice run by Barnes and Pickering, who beat Ross, and were only stopped by Thorpe when the former was on the point of shooting. Luton were now making the pace very hot, and a miskick by Ross saw Fryer running almost to the corner to kick away. Fulham were in a bad way, and R. Hawkes delighted the crowd by making rings round his opponents. Once Brown looked like scoring, but was grassed by Ross and Thorpe before he could get his kick in.

A lot of feeling now entered the game, and both sides provided fouls. Bell was hauled up short by McCurdy, but Hamilton rushed in, only to be grassed by White. Schofield next caught the eye with a great run on the right, which took the united efforts of Fulham's backs and Morrison to stop. The Luton forwards were like so many eels, and at times made the champions look very cheap. Ross had a trying time, and rarely has he been beaten so often. Threlfall and Wheatcroft again got down nicely, and the former's centre was nicely headed in by Edgley, but Platt caught the ball and threw away—a very near squeak indeed.

On re-starting Fryer had to fust a hot one from Warner, and Thorpe took the ball off Brown's foot as he was shooting. There was no mistaking the fact that Luton were goals better than Fulham now. They showed better combination, and were not so wild in their methods. Collins, however, did some smart things, and one of his passes to Edgley was splendid, but R. Hawkes again put the damper on Fulham's chances. The whole of Luton's front string went clean down the field with the finest piece of combination seen so far, and Fryer had no small difficulty in dealing with Pickering's final shot. He also had to get down at full length to another one from the same player a moment after, but he was as safe as ever.

Some long kicking now took place, and both teams were showing signs of wear and tear. Luton were the first to drop into a systematic attack, and Warner finished up a pretty combined run with Brown by sending inches wide, Morrison heading over. McCurdy soon after had to grass Hamilton, who appeared to get better as the game advanced, as he was shooting, but Goldie put the ball

in goal mouth, where Platt brought off yet another brilliant save.

Nothing further of note occurred, and play was going on in mid-field when time came with the sheet a blank. Luton were certainly worth points over Fulham, and had hard lines in not scoring. R. Hawkes outshone everyone else on the field, but Barnes and Pickering did good work on the wings.

Result: Luton, 0; Fulham, 0.

The "Daily Telegraph" says: "Last season Fulham gave one of their best displays against Luton, whom they met on Saturday. They failed to show anything like the same ability, the old fault of wretchedly poor shooting being strongly in evidence. High hopes were entertained that the inclusion of Hamilton, the Scottish International, would work a much-needed change in the methods of the Fulham attack, but so far the old Glasgow Ranger's man has done nothing to justify his inclusion. One cannot tell, of course, what the future has in store for him, but unless some improvement is shown all round among the forwards the club will lose a lot of support. Football crowds nowadays like to see goals scored, and they will not go to matches if the result is to be always the same—a goalless draw. The Fulham defence is, of course, admirable, the three half-backs and Fryer in goal invariably playing well. Half-backs, however, cannot be expected to do their own work and that of the forwards in addition."