

FOOTBALL.

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

BOTH POINTS CAPTURED AFTER INTERESTING GAME.

Luton Town's third Southern League match of the season, at home to Southampton, attracted a crowd of nearly 8,000 people to the Bury Park ground. The result was a well-deserved win for the homesters as under:—

LUTON 2 GOALS.

SOUTHAMPTON 1 GOAL.

Teams:—

Luton:—Platt; Jackson and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Schofield, Warner, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Southampton:—Clawley; Clarke and Eastham; Hogg, Bowden and McLean; Harrison, Glen, Radford, Harris, and Mouncher.

Referee:—Mr. A. J. Barker, of Hanley.

Last season's result was a victory for Luton by no less than 5—0, and this score set the football world talking. After the blues' capital display at Craven Cottage, it was hoped that history would repeat itself on this occasion, but though these sanguine expectations were not fulfilled, it was never left in doubt by the homesters that they were much the better team, and this was sufficient to put the crowd on very good terms with itself, and this happy condition was not even dissipated by some surprising decisions on the part of the referee.

The ground was in good condition when Clawley, winning the toss, set Luton to play with the strong rays of the sun in their eyes. Little of real interest occurred in the opening few minutes, neither team showing a marked tendency towards aggressive work. A foul by White gave the Saints the first opening of the match, but Glen, who still appears to suffer from the inability to shoot which lowered his displays with the 'Spurs, kicked over in a weak, aimless fashion. A short spell of ineffective work on both sides was followed by a welcome attack from the homesters, but neither "Bob" Hawkes nor "Sandy" Brown could make the Southampton captain admit himself beaten.

"Sandy" was, however, receiving an amount of attention from the visiting backs, which must have been flattering to his vanity, but was detrimental to his prospects. This tender solicitude on the part of the visiting defence showed itself prominently when he was brought down heavily within the fatal penalty area, but the disgust of the crowd which this unsportsmanlike action aroused was increased by the refusal of the official in charge to even acknowledge the offence by a simple free-kick. But Luton were not to be discouraged by the threatened roughness of the Southampton backs or the failings of the referee, and easily manifested their superiority for the next ten minutes. Clawley was kept in a state of unenviable suspense, but he maintained his customary cool attitude, and dealt very effectively with a stinging shot from Warner. "Bob" Hawkes looked like drawing first blood with one of his famous drives, but his aim was a couple of inches out.

Not to be denied, the blues returned to the attack from the goal kick, and "Bob" Hawkes was this time successful with one of his finest shots, thanks chiefly to some clever work on the right wing. The game was now 15 minutes old. The reverse aroused the pluck and determination of the Saints, whose work was enlivened with more dash, but was nevertheless unsuccessful, because of the brilliant defence set up against them by the Luton backs. The homesters returned to the attack, but allowed matters to slacken again, giving the Saints an opportunity to get within reach of Platt, where their desires were speedily made known by their centre-forward and inside men. On one occasion, though Radford had as clear a goal as any footballer could wish but completely lost his head and declined his opportunity with a widely aimed shot.

The homesters woke up again, and for a while gave the spectators considerable enjoyment by the easy manner in which they carried the ball through the ranks of their opponents. Their style was very fine right up to the front of the goal but, once there, their form was disappointing. Not a forward seemed to understand the geography of the goal, and some of the misses were tantalising to all. Just on the point of half-time the Saints made their way to the other end and good work on their part resulted in a corner against Luton. The home goal suffered a very narrow escape. In dashing forward to negotiate a hot, long drive from Bowden, Platt stumbled. For a moment appearances pointed to his having missed the ball, but, fortunately, he managed to catch it and clear. The interval arrived with Luton leading by a single goal to nil.

On the resumption Southampton went off with a dash, only to discover that Jackson, despite his lack of experience of first-class football, was as safe as a rock. But having been successfully banished once, they returned, but again Jackson was too good for them, and set the home forwards on an expedition to the other end. Here Pickering was robbed of the ball in a fashion which merited a penalty, but again Mr. Barker refused to notice the offence. After more pressure by the blues' forwards the Saints' front rank found the home halves less alert and broke clear through. The result was that Harris scored very neatly with a speedy shot, on receiving from Glen.

Southampton were encouraged by their success, and the home halves and backs passed through a very harassing time. But they never lost their heads and kept the lines clear until the forwards awoke to a sense of their responsibilities again. The left wing transferred play to the other end, where Clawley had to anxiously watch a hot scrimmage in front of his charge. This was broken up and danger averted in rather lucky fashion, and was succeeded by a spell of even play during which Jackson distinguished himself by some clean, clever work. In the closing stages Luton showed greater keenness and always held the upper hand. Nevertheless, it looked as though the match would end in a draw until the finish was drawing near. Then Brown was given a fairly easy opening in a little mix-up in front of goal, and gave his side the lead without much difficulty. Nothing further being scored, Luton ran out winner by the narrow margin of a goal.

A more correct indication of the play would have been 3—1 or 4—1, but the fact that Luton gained the two points gave great satisfaction to their supporters. On Saturday's display the Club is quite equal to improving on last season's position in the League table, and they should experience no difficulty whatever in beating last winter's performance in the Cup ties. The team is well-balanced, but if one spot is weaker than another that spot is the right wing. Schofield is the cleverest forward of the five but Warner seems slightly out of place in the inside position and fails to feed his mate thoroughly. His shooting on this occasion, too, was fearfully inaccurate. We would suggest that a trial be given to McDonald in the inside-right position, feeling sure that his inclusion would materially strengthen the whole team. And in this belief, we have the support of a very large proportion of the Club's supporters.

Jackson has proved himself to be a fine capture. He is as cool, clean, and resourceful as many of the most experienced footballers in the kingdom, and it is safe to say that unless his form is lowered very considerably Hogg will have no chance of reclaiming his position in the team. White played not nearly so well as at Craven Cottage, and "Bob" Hawkes, also, was far from being so brilliant as he had been a week before. Fred Hawkes, however, upheld his reputation for consistency, and appeared to be in the best fettle. Of the players all were good, but none so good as to merit special mention.