

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

With a considerable sprinkling of new players in their ranks, the ultimate outcome of the visit of Southampton to the Ivy-road enclosure on Saturday afternoon was in some little doubt. Though no enthusiast of the game went so far as to expect that the local team would repeat their performance of last season, when they beat the Saints by five goals to love, the general opinion was that Luton would hold their own. And so they did, winning by two goals to one.

Luton played the same term as at Fulham, and on a dry turf it is difficult to see where there can be much improvement of the side. True, there is still a weak point or two, and of course it is amongst the front line of attack. Warner played inside right to Schofield, but though the latter played a very plucky game, in the opinion of many critics, he is not such a good man on the wing as Warner. However, at his position on Saturday, "Alf" shone but very poorly indeed. For half of the game he completely starved Schofield, and at times he did not appear to be putting that amount of energy and judgment into the play which one had a right to expect. In the judgment of many the right wing should be constituted with Warner and MacDonald, or Schofield and MacDonald.

"Sandy" was about in his "usual form," but although there were incidents in Brown's play at which many of the spectators felt disappointed, the centre man, nevertheless, showed that he is still capable of putting in some tricky play. But it would be well if he did not lie offside so often. It has also to be remembered that Brown absorbs most of the attention of the opposing backs, so that fact ought to assist his partners materially. As a keen observer remarked in the Press-box on Saturday, "If 'Sandy' would only get his weight down, he would be the 'Sandy' of old." A good deal too slow he may now be, but until Luton are able to get a better centre forward, it is futile to be continually finding fault with Brown. Good men for that position are not picked up every day.

Pickering has not yet got quite into his stride. Up to the present he has not given much of an exhibition, but if I remember rightly it took Pickering some weeks last season to get into form. Barnes's work on Saturday did not appear to "come off," notwithstanding the beautiful centres he kept putting in, particularly in the second half. Whenever he got in close contact with Clark, the visitors' right back, he displayed a certain amount of nervousness that was fatal to an otherwise praiseworthy effort.

Of the halves, Fred Hawkes played a great game, and so did the other two men. But undoubtedly, the display that took the attention of the home supporters most was the magnificent work of Jackson at back. During the whole afternoon he never made one mistake, and kicking with such cool but sound judgment earned him high commendation. For the present Jackson's place in the team is secured.

As to the game itself, it could not be classed amongst the "great games," even if at times there was some really first class play. The first moiety was particularly interesting, but Luton proved themselves rather the more aggressive. Play was never slow, and both ends were being visited repeatedly. Then came Luton's first success, when R. Hawkes scored with a stinging shot, which it was impossible for Clawley to save. The visitors had to wait for the second 45 minutes before they could draw level, which they did with a shot from Harris, than which a nicer goal will scarcely be obtained on the Luton ground for some months. The winning goal, obtained by Brown, was a lucky bit of business. Of course, the locals were the better team, notwithstanding that the play of the forwards deteriorated considerably for a time in the second half, and deserved to win. There was a certain amount of hard luck on both sides.

About 8,000 spectators assembled to witness the match. "Bob" lost the toss, and Luton had to play against the sun in the first half. The opening of the game was marked by some long, aimless kicking. Hawkes made an attempt to get his men into line, but his wing pass to Barnes bore no good result, for Pickering was speedily robbed. As the result of a foul against White, Glen was able to have a shot at goal, but the ball went just wide of the mark. After a period, the Luton men succeeded in reaching Clawley, and both Hawkes and Brown made praiseworthy, but ineffective efforts to register a goal. Luton were, for a time, easily the better side, and kept Clawley in a continued state of suspense. He made a brilliant clearance from Warner, and then looked like having his goal captured with a hard drive from R. Hawkes, which just grazed the post. No sooner had Clawley kicked off from goal than back again returned the Luton attack, and R. Hawkes concluded some smart work by Schofield and Warner by scoring a beautiful goal.

After this, the Saints made several ineffective attempts to alter the complexion of the game, but beyond a clever piece of work by Radford, they could do nothing. Radford, however, marred his reputation when, with an open goal, he shot wide of the mark.

As the game progressed, the quality of the play improved considerably. Luton repeatedly carried the ball down the field in machine-like style, but only to conclude by demonstrating their poor marksmanship. Just before the interval, Glen and McLean narrowly missed scoring. The half-time score was: Luton 1, Southampton 0.

Re-starting, the Saints went off with a wild rush, but Jackson sent them back into their own quarters twice in succession. Then Pickering, assisted by Brown and Barnes, carried play into the vicinity of Clawley. Here Pickering was charged off the ball, and a loud but unsuccessful appeal was made to the referee for a penalty. A clever, combined run by Schofield and Warner ended in an offside decision against Luton. A little while after this, Brown headed wide a fine centre from Schofield. A little laxity by the Luton half-backs allowed the Southampton forwards to break clean away. The result was that Harris, taking a capital pass from Glen, scored with a fast, long shot.

During the next few minutes excellent work was accomplished by both teams, and the visitors attacked with the keenest determination. Jackson and McCurdy, receiving the greatest support from their half-backs and goalkeeper, fought during this trying period in fine style. Just after this, the Southampton goal had a somewhat lucky escape from a scrimmage that took place right in front of Clawley. Luton again attacked with vigour. This time, Clawley's goal seemed certain to be captured, but by a superhuman effort, Eastham rushed in and cleared. It looked as though the game, which had been of a fairly even, but always interesting, character, was about to end in a draw. But while the spectators were preparing to leave the field, Brown scored, and thereby succeeded in winning the match for the Strawplaiters.

Result: Luton, two goals; Southampton, one goal.