

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

SOUTHAMPTON v. LUTON.

The football season opened on Monday. The cricketer will soon have put by his bat and ball for the winter, and the goal-posts will gleam at each end of the field. Football, of course, is a very serious business in these days, and the interest it evokes will not be satisfied unless a start is made at the earliest possible moment. On Monday therefore, Luton were due to appear at Southampton in the Southern League.

Six times the South coast team have won the championship, and, generally speaking, they have always managed to take a good place. Last year, however, they experienced a drop and fell far below Luton, who figured fourth on the table, Southampton being eleventh. They have got together a fine set of players, and evidently intend to make a strong bid for a premier place this year in the League and the English Cup, in which latter contest they have twice been runners-up. More than one first-class team have bitten the dust at the Dell, and probably there will be others.

We have had an opportunity of seeing what the Luton men can do, and it may, therefore, be well to have a look at the side which Southampton have got together. Of the old players they have Burrows and H. Loch, goalkeepers; Clarke, Glover and Eastham, backs; Robertson, half-back; Harrison, Hoskins, A. E. Dyer, Jepp, Jefferies, Bell, Beare, and Mouncher of the old brigade, and an imposing array of new talent. In the half-back line they have made several changes. Hadley, of Notts Forest, Smith, of Plymouth Argyle, Johnson, of Bury, and Thorpe, also of Notts Forest have been induced to join the Red Stripes half-back line. Lewis has been secured from Brighton, Costello from Halsowen, Bainbridge of Portsmouth, and Hodgkinson of Bury, to strengthen the forward line. Southampton have, therefore, some "hot stuff" to call upon, and the difficulty of picking out the best is, no doubt, not a very slight one.

Bob Hawkes was not able to go South. The popular captain, I understand, is going into business, and all the local footballers will wish him the utmost possible success. Jones, therefore, came and took part in the match at left half. The kick-off did not take place until 5.15, on account of the anticipated hot weather.

The following were the Teams:—

LUTON.

Platt

Hogg

McCurdy

F. Hawkes

White

Jones

Walders

Hall

Brown

Pearson

Rankin

O

Moucher Jefferies Harrison Lewis Bainbridge

Hedley

Thorpe

Johnson

Glover

Eastham

Burrows

SOUTHAMPTON.

SOUTHAMPTON SCORE EARLY.

There were 2,000 spectators at the start, which took place in rain. The Luton captain won the toss and the referee had to pull the game up for a foul against White. The ball was placed to Moucher, who shot hard at goal. The ball struck the post and glanced off along the goal, Platt in pursuit. Before he could get to it Lewis was in a good position and quickly scored goal No. 1 for Southampton.

This was a most unfortunate start for Luton for the game was only about a minute old when the disaster befel them. Nothing daunted, however, they set about attempting retaliation, but they were not blessed with the luck which accompanied Southampton.

Hawkes forced the play and gave to Brown. The latter shot and Burrows coming out, failed to pick up the sphere because of the slippery state of the ball, but recovered at the second attempt, no Lutonian unfortunately being up.

Bainbridge ran through and centred, Harrison almost heading a second goal for Southampton.

From close quarters White headed away into touch a flying centre from Bainbridge. Jones passed to Pearson and Luton's left made a nice attempt, but Johnston stopped by fouling. The free kick came to nothing, Eastham relieving. Luton right attacked, causing Glover to kick out. Hawkes robbed Moucher, forcing a goal kick to Luton.

Moucher put in a grand shot, and Platt punched up amid a crowd of players. White eventually clearing, assisted by a bit of luck. Rankin was fouled near the corner, and the free kick was well placed, Hawkes putting the ball just wide of goal.

Burrows threw away a long shot and Southampton then played the long passing game. Bainbridge and Moucher being furnished with the ball at every opportunity. Luton forwards did not settle down for the first twenty minutes. Hall and Walders managed to get through from a miskick by Eastham, and Walders slung in a fine shot. Burrows scarcely held the ball, because of Brown's close attentions, but the referee, however, gave "Sandy" offside.

Jones gave Pearson the ball and some good combination from Brown and the Luton left wing threatened danger. Rankin, however, placed wide. Harrison had a clear run through, but McCurdy hooked him down from behind, the crowd hooting a good deal. Bainbridge got away again, but McCurdy just nipped in and passed back to Platt, the latter relieving with a huge kick. The rain stopped about this time, but the ball was very greasy.

Off-side against Moucher gave Luton an opportunity. Hall received from Hogg, who took the place kick, but the referee pulled up Walders very doubtfully. Rain only stopped for ten minutes, coming down again harder than ever and threatening to stop the game.

A corner was conceded Southampton, but was easily cleared. Moucher tricked Hawkes right on the goal line, but Hogg cleared with a huge kick into touch. Another corner fell to the Saints and from this Luton got down, but "Sandy" was again given off-side. Hall tried a long shot, but the ball passed just wide, this being the best attempt up to this point for Luton. Long kicking from both sides of backs was a distinct feature of the game, the four men generally being very safe.

Eastham neatly robbed Pearson from Rankin's pass, and set his forwards going. Once more Hogg proved the saviour of his side. With only five minutes to go Luton made desperate efforts to make headway and Walders placed a corner kick rather short, Hall just reaching it, but could not get in a shot, being bundled over.

Bainbridge attempted an individual run, but White and McCurdy prevented him getting the ball across. He repeated the run a minute later,

but the ball hit the side of the net and only proved a goal kick.

Half Time:

SOUTHAMPTON

ONE

LUTON

NIL.

In the second half Rankin shot thirty yards out and the ball shaved the bar. Jones fouled Bainbridge and was cautioned by the referee. Harrison almost headed through from a place kick. Platt, who dashed out to Harrison (who was practically clear again) and, giving a huge kick placed the ball on the top of the stand. Twice Platt punched away, while surrounded by opponents.

Hawkes ran through and the ball was passed to Jones, who sent out again to Rankin, who put in a grounder which hit the outside of the goal-post.

Hall sent Walders through, but the latter player was not well placed, and Glover put out the near corner. Brown passed with a side kick to Pearson, and Eastham handled. A penalty was awarded to Luton; Jones took the kick and scored in the corner of the net, and thus equalised twenty minutes after the re-start.

Result:

SOUTHAMPTON

TWO

LUTON

ONE

Jefferies scored for Southampton 10 minutes from time.