

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. PLYMOUTH ARGYLE.

TOWN HAVE HARD LUCK.

THEIR BEST EXHIBITION YET.

Played at Home Park, Plymouth, on Saturday.
Result:—

PLYMOUTH ARGYLE	2 GOALS
LUTON	1 GOAL

The teams were as under:—

LUTON.—Platt, Hogg, McCurdy, F. Hawkes, White, Jones, Rankin, Hall, Pearson, R. Hawkes, and Latheron.

PLYMOUTH.—Sutcliffe, Butler, Atterbury, McCormick, Clarke, McIntyre, Burch, Leonard, Ingham, Morris, and Holden.

Referee: Mr. T. Armit (Leek).

Luton's task in tackling the top club in the Southern League on their own ground appeared a hopeless one on paper, but the players were not dismayed and expressed themselves determined to break through the spell of ill-luck. Argyle had out the exact team which beat Crystal Palace the previous Saturday, and 10,000 spectators assembled with bright hopes of seeing a large crop of goals.

Luton stayed at Teignmouth on Friday night so as to be better prepared, and a very pleasant time was spent by the sea. But the play is the thing, and right here it is only fair to state the players fully deserved a better result than came about. Bob Hawkes for once won the toss, but it mattered little, except that the visitors had the sun at their backs at the start. Argyle got away for a start and Morris secured, only to be pulled up by Fred Hawkes. Coming again, Ingham was well placed, but Hogg came to the rescue and cleared splendidly. Luton's turn now arrived and Butler let in R. Hawkes and Latheron. The situation promised the downfall of the home goal thus early in the game; Clarke, however managed to put in an appearance on the spot just in time and thus suppressed the first real attack from Luton's vanguard. Still the visitors held the advantage for several minutes without being able to engineer a real opening, the home backs saving more by good luck than good judgment.

To the surprise of the spectators, Luton were quite holding their own, and it was evident the game was to be fiercely contested. The most dangerous movement of the opening quarter of an hour came about through a characteristic run and centre by Latheron, who dropped the ball well in front, and Pearson, dashing up, got his head cleverly to the ball which beat Sutcliffe, but unfortunately just failed to reach the net and went for a goal kick about a yard wide of the extreme top corner of the goalpost. For the first quarter of an hour Platt was never called upon, but, of course, he had to thank his backs for a deal of this comparative idleness, both Hogg and McCurdy playing a grand defensive game. But after twenty minutes Burch sprinted with the ball while Jones and McCurdy were appealing for offside, and the referee allowed him to drop the ball right across the goalmouth, where Ingham had an easy chance, of which he took full advantage, and Luton were faced with an uphill task.

For a few minutes it appeared Argyle would increase their lead, and Platt was harder pressed, but the attack was gradually worn down and the game resumed its open character. Sutcliffe kicked away a long attempt with ease, but the ball was quickly returned, and Pearson, giving the ball to Hall, the latter equalised with a good shot all along the ground. Sutcliffe came out to meet it, but Hall kept his head and the ex-Boltonian had no chance. Things looked rather black for Argyle's record when Pearson enticed Sutcliffe out a minute later, and the ball again beat him, and a goal seemed certain, for it was impossible for Sutcliffe to get back in time to prevent the ball crossing the line, but unfortunately the upright was struck and, running back, Sutcliffe was able to pick up and throw away. Another goal at this point would probably have meant two points for Luton, but the good luck was only for the Argyle. From this point to the interval Luton were the better side, and nothing but sheer good fortune saved Sutcliffe's goal from falling again. But nothing further was done up to the teams retiring for the usual breather at half-time.

On the restart Luton were again the leaders in

attack, and Pearson for the third time in the match clean beat Sutcliffe without finding the net. This time the ball went for a goal kick within a yard of the upright farthest away from Sutcliffe. At this stage Butler was the saviour of the Pilgrims with some fine clearances. Still it seemed only a question of how long it would be before the home defence would break down and Luton get the lead. But just here a breakaway found Ingham with the ball. Both backs lying wide, Platt came out to force a shot from the home centre-forward before he arrived inside the penalty area, but he failed to prevent the ball reaching the net, and what proved the winning goal was the result. Platt was in no sense to blame for this misfortune, but it appeared that Hogg could have saved the situation if he had passed the ball back before Ingham settled on it. Still, it is always easy to be wise after the event, and in trying to get the ball up the field no doubt Hogg felt he was doing the best for his side.

This goal, coming about twenty minutes before the finish, seemed to settle Luton's chances, for they never afterwards had so large a share of the game as before—that is, so far as attack was concerned, for the defence still maintained a stubborn front, and did not allow any other goals. Plymouth thus succeeded in keeping their place at the top after what their players confessed was the hardest struggle they had been called upon to face so far this season.

Although Luton lost, their efforts in this match gave hope of better things in the near future, and it was certainly their best exhibition to date especially in attack. Bob Hawkes made some beautiful passes, and was decidedly the cleverest forward, but suffered from his want of sufficient avordupois to enable him to force matters at critical moments. Pearson had the hardest of hard lines in not finding the net, and appears likely to keep his position as pivot. Latheron also seems to have settled down as the regular outside left, but the right wing still do not quite come up to expectations. Hall is skilful and does many fine things, but somehow his passes are not made the most use of. Rankin would do better if he got off at once instead of attempting to trick his man. Still, on the whole, the line as constituted at Plymouth, or with Walders as inside left, promises to justify a prolonged trial.

Everyone agrees the defence is quite up to Southern League requirements, and once again they did all that could be reasonably expected. Without a doubt F. Hawkes was the best player on the field, both in defence and attack; he was seldom beaten always had plenty of resource, and usually came out with the ball from the most dangerous situations. Jones also did well in this department. Indeed, the whole division played up to their great reputation, and this is saying a great deal.

GOALIE.