

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. WEST HAM.

STILL ANOTHER DEFEAT.

A FURTHER SLICE OF BAD LUCK.

Disappointment still reigns in the camp of the Luton Town supporters, for their favourites had to retire beaten again last Saturday, although playing at home. West Ham United were the visitors, and that fortune favoured them is shown by the following result:—

WEST HAM

3 GOALS

LUTON

NIL

Teams:—

LUTON.

Platt

Jones

McCurdy

F. Hawkes

White

R. Hawkes

Rankin

Hall

Brown

Moody

Latheron

O

Blackburn Kemp H. Stapley Grassam Lee

Young

Watson

Allison

Taylor

Gault

Kitchen

WEST HAM.

Referee: Mr. S. D. Peers (Liverpool).

The crowd, which numbered between 7,000 and 8,000, gave a very cordial welcome to Bert Moody on his return to the Luton ranks after a couple of seasons with Leicester Fosse. The sun shone brilliantly, and the weather was really too warm for football, as the sweat-drenched condition of some of the players proved before the game was very old.

Kitchen won the toss and set the home eleven to kick off with the sun in their eyes. The hopes of the spectators that the Town would make an example of West Ham after their victory over them in a less important match earlier in the week looked like being realised at the start, for the Blues went off with a dash that foreboded disaster for the Hammers' ambitions.

Stapley found his fellow-amateur on the opposing side too hard a nut to crack, and Bob Hawkes put a stop to one of his characteristic dashes towards Platt. Jones brought the ball out from a crowd of players clustering in the goalmouth and cleared, setting in motion a clever dash by Moody and Brown, as the result of which Brown sent in a fine shot just above the corner formed by the goalpost and crossbar. Fred Hawkes had similarly hard luck with a shot that struck the goal furniture.

A little later the West Ham backs found themselves in a tangle and the Luton forwards were presented with as fine an opening as they could desire, but threw it away by hesitation. Taylor got in the way of a shot by Hall, which would have given Kitchen a lot of trouble, and Bob Hawkes tested the goalie with a very fast free kick. McCurdy was defending in his very best fashion, and Lee found Bob Hawkes a real thorn in his side.

Hall threw away as clear an opportunity as he could wish to have by passing the ball on to the feet of a back instead of to Brown, but Rankin managed a minute later to send in a fine shot which flashed past the post at a tremendous pace. A corner to Luton resulted in Kitchen being placed in difficulties, out of which he was fortunate to escape unscathed. A little of the ever-necessary luck would have carried Moody through a moment later, and a second attempt from the same player's foot was rendered fruitless by the ball glancing behind off an opponent's chest.

West Ham drew first blood after 35 minutes' play, Grassam receiving and placing in the net through a misunderstanding between the home backs. Hall had a chance to equalise a minute afterwards when Brown transferred the ball to him in the goalmouth, but he dallied again and was beaten by a visiting defender. Half-time arrived with West Ham leading by a single goal to nil.

The second period started sensationally. White badly missed a centre by Lee, but Stapley profited by his mistake and banged the ball into the net. Such an unlucky reverse had a discouraging effect upon the Luton vanguard, and when Stapley added a third point about ten minutes later with a magnificent shot, they lost heart and their display fell off fully 50 per cent., while the West Ham attack improved.

The second period after this lacked interest altogether, and the crowd began to thin quite a quarter of an hour from the start, the comments of the disgusted spectators being very pointed. The fact that Luton have won only a single point in five Southern League matches was freely remarked upon, and the expression, "wooden spoonists" was used several times.

Undoubtedly Luton were unfortunate in having to start with the handicap of a weakened defence, for Jones was anything but comfortable in his unusual position at back. His selection, rather than that of White, is one which those outside the Board of Directors find it difficult to understand.

It is pleasant to be able to compliment the half-back line generally, and Bob Hawkes in particular. The amateur was in his best form. In the forward string Brown and Moody were the only ones to deserve commendation. The display of the others was poor.