

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON LOSE AT WEST HAM.

Bad luck continues to dog Luton's footsteps. On Saturday they were very unfortunate in not bringing a point away with them from Upton Park. The visitors were supposed to have their strongest forward line. A new man, W. Porter (London Caledonians) was tried at outside left, Walders standing down. Pearson was put in the centre again, with Rigate and Rankin on the right wing, and Moody inside left. Hogg was also back in the team, and Jones was substituted for White at centre-half, having R. M. Hawkes and F. Hawkes as partners. In view of their Cup-tie on Saturday, it was also understood that the Hammers were giving a rest to about four of their best players.

Luton had therefore a good chance, it was believed; but they did not succeed in even drawing level with the locals. This was exceptionally hard luck, because the game was so very even that a goal ought not to have separated the teams. The final result was a win of 1-0 for the Hammers, but a draw was the least that Luton were entitled to on their performance. Still, this was only another illustration of the vagaries of football—only it is so often against the Town.

Play opened fast, and both goals were early visited. Blackburn placed too far ahead after a nice run, and a splendid dash by the Luton forwards ended in Porter shooting just wide. A corner to Luton was followed by a similar concession to West Ham, and from this a terrific drive by Allison was luckily blocked. After a Luton attack, Frost got clear away, but McCurdy overtook, and a nong-nong battle between the two ended in the Hammers being forced over the line. A good clearance by Hogg sent play into the home ones, and a free-kick against Allison gave the visitors further advantage. A wild place-kick disposed of the chance, however. Luton came again, and Rigate sent across a capital centre, which was missed by three men before the ball ran over the line. Rigate was again in evidence, and forced two corners, but the second was badly placed.

A run to the other end was easily disposed of, and Luton again attacked, the understanding between the halves and forwards being perfect. Rankin had a great chance, but was fouled by Young just outside the penalty area. The ball was shot straight in, but Kitchen saved, and the Hammers lost no time in getting to the other end. A grand shot by Stapley was brilliantly saved by Platt, and a moment later the goalkeeper tipped a long drive from Allison over the bar. From the flag-kick Shea scored after the goalkeeper had pushed the ball out, but the referee disallowed the point, despite loud protestations from the home players. The game became more exciting than ever after this, and both goals ran narrow escapes. A hot Luton attack culminated in a free kick being given against the visitors, and Platt was immediately tested by Stapley. A centre by Frost also spelt danger, but McCurdy got the ball away. Half time was called a minute later with a blank score.

Upon resuming, the locals went away with a rush, but were soon brought up, and Luton held the upper hand for a time. Allison was penalised for paying undue attentions to Porter and Moody, but nothing came of the free kick. After Frost had led a West Ham foray, Porter replied for Luton, but his centre was not improved on. A long shot by Young reached the crowd behind the Luton goal, and a similar attempt by Pearson at the other end went past by inches. The first straight shot since the resumption came from Frost, but Platt cleared without worry. A moment later, however, he received a terrific shot from Stapley close in, and brought off a really brilliant save. The ball was tipped over, and the resultant flag kick went behind. Platt received another shot, and, carrying the ball too far while saving, a free-kick was given against Luton within two yards of the goal line. Poor judgment was shown in taking the kick, and Luton got the ball away.

West Ham returned, however, and for a time Platt was tested from all quarters. The Luton goalkeeper was in great form, and saved everything, and Porter at length broke away, and, with a little steadiness must have scored, but he shot too hastily, and Kitchen saved at the expense of a corner. Another grand save by Kitchen followed, and then Frost got away and centred across the goal-mouth. Hogg cleared, but Young placed the ball nicely into goal again, and after it had flashed about dangerously near Platt, Watson succeeded in scraping it through.

This success had an effect on both sides, and bright play followed. Bustling work by the Luton forwards kept Kitchen in a state of unrest, but Hammond and Taylor were very safe, and received capital assistance from Young and Allison. Play continued to be very open, but with West Ham the more frequently dangerous, and the result was by no means a foregone conclusion. Luton strove hard to save the game, and with the home forwards, especially Shea and Frost, very lively, the excitement was sustained. A long shot by Blackburn just missed, and after Rigate and Porter had made good attempts at the other end, a rising shot from Young whipped over the bar. A neat centre by Frost looked bad for Luton, but the ball was scraped clear. Towards the end the home side had the better of the exchanges, but could do nothing against the visitors' defence, and a closely contested game finished:—West Ham, one goal, Luton, nil.

It was Kitchen who alone saved the game for West Ham. The Luton forward line did much better, and even showed excellent combination at times. Porter was scarcely as dashing as Walders, but he has not yet got in "touch" with Moody. Some of his centres, however, were brilliant, but were not sufficiently followed up. The Blues' defence was better on Saturday than it has been, while Platt had cruel luck in being beaten by the shot that scored.