

Football Notes and News.

[By "GOALPOST."]

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SOUTHAMPTON.

"BLUES" "LUCKY WIN.

The match between Luton and Southampton, played on the Ivy-road ground on Saturday afternoon, was really one of the football treats of the season, and the six thousand spectators who witnessed the encounter had more than value for their money. Luton won by the one solitary goal, but it is not often that Southampton have been beaten by the Straw-plaiters. For instance, last season the Saints won on both occasions—at home 2-1, and at Luton 2-0.

Luton had their usual team in the field, but Southampton had a reserve half-line out in Jepp, Trueman, and Bamford, the first team men being on the injured list. The weather conditions during most of the game were ideal. The visitors won the spin, and decided to take advantage of what slight breeze there was.

Southampton quickly opened the attack on the left, but Hodgkinson sent behind. Luton took up the running, and Stansfield centred to Moody, who sent just wide. The Saints retaliated, but the home defence held good, and once again play was transferred. Haycock had a chance, but could not control the ball, and Stansfield could not reach the target. Jefferies and Gordon were prominent for the Saints and forced the play. Two corners resulted, and after Bainbridge had put the ball across Hughes headed over the bar.

The game was exceedingly level, and yet varied, the ball being first at one end and then at the other. Moody dropped a centre on to the cross-bar of the Saints' goal, while at the other end Southampton all but scored on several occasions. Lock brought off a fine save when Menzies shot high and hard, though he conceded a corner. At the other end Platt ran out to clear from a corner, but missed, and Bainbridge thought the goal was sure, and kicked gently, so that McCurdy was able to save the ball from the very jaws of the net. Shortly before half-time Stansfield got the ball when well placed and scored, the teams thus crossing over with Luton leading by 1 goal.

Resuming, the Saints attacked, but Gregory gave them the right-about, and Luton raced away on the left. Stansfield dropped the ball in the centre, and a little more energy on the part of Menzies would have brought a goal. The centre-forward, however, hesitated, and was easily robbed, while the visitors profited by setting up strong pressure. Bainbridge hit the bar with a rousing shot, and then Hughes was temporarily disabled. The Saints made desperate endeavours to get on an equality, but luck and the Luton defence were up against them. McCurdy made a fortunate clearance, once when all seemed lost, and at the other end both the Southampton backs miskicked and presented Moody with an open goal, but that player slipped and lost the chance.

Play then returned to the Luton half, where it remained for a considerable time. Bainbridge was very prominent, his pace being too much for the home defenders. Brown and Haycock gave Luton a look-in, but Glover cleared. Play was very interesting, the exchanges in mid-field being quite exciting at times. In an attack on the home goal Gregory and McCurdy stood up well, and Platt was only tested with long shots, which he dealt with cleverly. Two good ones came from Bainbridge, and just after, at the other end, Haycock missed by inches, Lock being out of his goal at the time. The last few minutes of the play were in favour of the Saints, who tried hard to save the game, but without success.

Result: Luton, 1 goal; Southampton, nil.

After having practically three-quarters of the play, it was keenly disappointing to Southampton to be robbed of victory by the only goal of the match. Certain it is that Luton never had more luck than what they had on Saturday—it is doubtful whether they will ever have such good fortune again. The home goal was subjected to a fusillade of shots, and nothing but a packed citadel prevented the visitors finding the net. Southampton went in for the long passing game, and did it very prettily too.

In the field Luton held their own, but the forward line lacked dash. Menzies was especially disappointing — he failed to take advantage of the chances himself, and he was largely responsible for the weakness of the attack. On the other hand, the Saints' forwards, with an advantage in height, were constantly on the move, and Platt, the home custodian, was perhaps the most prominent player in the home ranks, doing some really clever work, but being a trifle lucky at times.

On one occasion a centre from the visitors' left wing struck the upright, and the ball appeared as if it went inside the net, but the referee, who was in the best position of all to judge, refused the point, on being appealed to by the Saints. On another occasion nothing but the sawdust stopped the ball from gently rolling into the net, McCurdy getting back in the nick of time and clearing.

It was just on half-time when Stansfield opened the score for Luton. The ball came across from the right wing, and Stansfield being well up, essayed a shot. Lock, the Saints' goal-keeper, evidently misjudged the flight of the leather, for he never offered to stop the shot, with the result that the ball landed in the farther end of the net.

During the last quarter of an hour Luton did really wake up, and for a time the Southampton defence was severely pressed, but a packed goal for them, too, sufficiently answered the purpose. Then the Saints made one more desperate effort to draw level, but the home defence were equal to all emergencies, and the whistle blew with Southampton game to the end.