

FOOTBALL,

One Valuable Goal

COSTS WEST HAM DEAR.

A Thrilling Finish.

LUTON v. WEST HAM.

Luton accomplished a welcome victory on Saturday against West Ham United, and turned the tables very effectively on last year's result, when the Hammers won by three goals to nil. Saturday's teams:

Luton.—Platt; Chapman and Gregory; F. Hawkes, Jones and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Haycock, Menzies, Johnson and Stansfield.

West Ham.—Kitchen; Shreeve and Taylor; Yenson, Chalkley and Tirrell; Frost, Shea, Miller, Waggott and Blackburn.

Referee, Mr. F. Heath (Birmingham).

Luton lost the toss, but at once made tracks for the visitors' goal, but the ball went behind. Gregory gave Platt a kick to clear, and once more Luton went to the other end. The Hammers were not long before they forced a corner, after Blackburn had made a mistake in not shooting. The ball at the second attempt went behind. The players slipped about a good deal on the hard ground. Brown had a chance, but arrived too late. Haycock sent into Kitchen's hands, but he cleared, and a moment later Haycock was cheered for some good play.

The Hammers' goalie had to handle again, but cleared an easy shot. To the other end the ball travelled, but Haycock kicked away, only for Yenson to return wide. Haycock gave Brown a good pass, but he could not get the ball into the centre.

Jones handled, but though the referee was less than six yards away he failed to see it, though the linesman half waved his flag for the infringement. Shea had the easiest of chances as the ball rolled off Gregory's back, and he could have taken it through. Platt coolly cleared from a weak shot.

Chalkley twice brought Menzies down, and from the second kick Kitchen had to clear. Play wakened up a bit after this. West Ham had to kick out to clear, and then Frost ran the ball over the line at the Luton end. Brown forced a corner, but F. Hawkes shot wide of goal.

Shea placed the ball into the hands of Platt, Chapman was cheered for repeatedly clearing. Luton then secured a goal. Brown got the ball, took it round Taylor, and then centred. Tirrell should have kicked away, but he slipped on the hard ground, and whilst Johnson was working the ball into position, Menzies got his foot in and beat Kitchen.

Luton missed a glorious chance. Johnson looked to have a gift, but a Hammer ruckily got in the way. Menzies might have had a shot, but left the ball to Johnson, whose chance it really was, and the ball was smothered.

The play afterwards to the interval was in favour of Luton, but they could not get through on the very hard, treacherous ground. Chapman gave a corner in the last minute, and no sooner had the ball been kicked off than the "cease fire" sounded. Interval: Luton 1 goal; West Ham, nil.

Platt had to save in the first minute. Brown and Haycock put in some work which culminated in a dash across the ground by Brown, but Kitchen caught the ball and kicked away. Haycock sent a rare stinger straight to the goalkeeper, but he luckily happened to be in the direct line of fire.

Gregory gave Kitchen a long shot to fist at, and he sent the ball well out, only for it to be returned and a corner forced, which was resultless. Platt joined in the play by dashing out, and as it looked long odds on Frost getting there first the situation appeared hopeless, but Platt took the ball by means of footwork and kicked away. Platt came into collision with Shea, and had to retire, and Johnson went between the sticks. A foul was given against Bob Hawkes. Peter then returned between the sticks. Miller had a chance of making the score level, but Platt saved well, and then Waggott made a miserable ending to a great chance by sending wide.

Waggott had hard luck with a shot which struck Gregory. Luton were in the way of fortune for a change. The ball would not go in the Luton goal.

Brown skimmed the bar with a real hot 'un, and a foot lower would have told a different story. Brown tried another, but Kitchen was smart enough to put over the bar. The corner proved resultless but Brown had to take another, which was also got away.

Kitchen had the better of a deal with Brown.

Three times the crossbar was struck by Brown, Johnson and Stansfield. Johnson's looked all the world a scorer, the ball striking the underneath part of the bar, and then returning on this and the other occasions to the field of play. There was no more scoring, and the result was:

LUTON 1 goal.

WEST HAM U. nil.

NOTES ON THE GAME.

A MIXTURE OF MIS-KICKS.

LUTON'S NEW RECRUIT.

Saturday's match was not a great one. It was seldom that the play rose above mediocrity. The ground, which had more than a suspicion of "bone" about it, largely accounted for this. Further, the ball was lively, and with the turf hard as concrete, the players did not care to risk themselves. Consequently, we saw many sliced kicks and ill-directed passes.

Chapman's debut in a Southern League match aroused interest. As we pointed out last week, he has signed a professional form for Luton. He played a serviceable game, his tackling being clean and incisive. It would be idle to say that

he is more than an average player; he is not. Many are the things that he must learn first. But he is a diamond in the rough, and, when the facets are polished and furnished, he may scintillate. He is plucky and promising. His worst fault is a tendency to lose his feet when tackling. On Saturday, more than once he beat Fred Blackburn, the visitors' outside left, single-handed. This same Blackburn is an ex-international, and at one time was one of the most promising forwards in the country. Performances, however, have never come up to the promises. On Saturday, he had nothing to give away in his encounter with the Bedford youngster.

After the fierce excitement engendered by the cup ties, League games have a tendency to fall flat. Saturday's match was also unprofitable, the gate being, I should think, the worst of the season. In the first half there was little to enthuse over beyond Menzies' goal, which was the outcome of some pretty combined play on the right.

In the second half we saw Luton touch better favour, and sheer ill-luck robbed them of the fruit of their foraging. Three times, with a reiteration that was exasperating, did the ball strike the visitors' crossbar. Each time Kitchen was unplaced, and the Hammers escaped luckily. Johnson and Stansfield failed to combine well on the left, and Moody was a missed man. Haycock and Brown, however, did great work in the second half, the bigger man making a lot of opportunities for his sprightly, swift-moving comrade. Brown looked good for a goal more than once, but somehow never got it.

The Hammers had more than one chance of striking a rich vein. Twice the whole quintette, grouped round the goal with the ball in possession, failed to score. Peter Platt, of course, had something to do with it, but on one occasion he should have been powerless had the shot had sufficient powder behind it. Peter, however, gave a big display, and did not spare himself on the ground, which was as hard in places as the pavement in George-street. He got badly mixed up once, and was hurt. Johnson, who took his place beneath the bar for the time being, was happily untested, and Peter returned to keep the visitors at bay till the finish.