

FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "Vigilant."

LUTON'S OPENING MATCH.

Southern League Points Shared
with Norwich.

HOME FORWARDS' WEAK
SHOOTING.

A Fortunate Penalty Kick.

Really, it was too bad of that obstinate autocrat, the Clerk of the Weather, to behave as he did yesterday. In every district which boasts a professional team of note, football followers eagerly look forward to "the glorious First," as it is called, and it was a scurvy trick to attempt to damp their enthusiasm by appointing such wretched weather for the opening day of the season. Mr. Weather Clerk, however, knows but little of football enthusiasts if he thought his plan would succeed. They are not fair weather individuals, and though you may damp their clothes you cannot damp their ardour. Still, they are entitled to expect decent weather conditions in the opening match of the season.

It required little imagination to compare yesterday to a December day. The atmosphere was decidedly chilly, and the rain made it wretched for everybody. But the folks were not to be deterred. They turned up in waterproofs and great coats and with umbrellas, and everywhere the attendance at the opening matches furnished proof of the tremendous hold "soccer" has gained upon the British public. For some few days there had been grave fears that the opening of the football programme would be upset as a result of the revolt which has been carried on by a section of the professional teams, but the prospects were completely altered by the truce declared on the eve of the important day, and happily the worst fears were not realised.

At Luton it was anticipated that the fact of the opening match falling on an early closing day would cause the attendance to be larger than is usually the case. This expectation was not realised, but under the circumstances the crowd was a very satisfactory one. It was quite up to the average for an opening match, there being close upon 4,000 spectators present.

AN UNSATISFACTORY START.

The result of the match was not so satisfactory. True, Luton did not begin with a defeat, but they lost a valuable Southern League point, and when it is remembered that last season only seven points were lost in the twenty home matches it cannot be regarded as a very promising start. Still, there is no need to be discouraged. The team is practically a new one, and must take time to get into proper working order, and it was too much to expect that they would reach the top of their form with the weather conditions so unfavourable. A sodden ground is not conducive to accurate football, and the Luton players were not alone in failing to rise to the occasion. As a matter of fact, the game was not a great one for the display of football it produced, but it was keenly fought out, and interest never flagged from start to finish.

TWO NEW TEAMS.

Norwich City were the visitors to Luton for the opening match last year, and on that occasion were badly beaten by 4—0. They were, however, a vastly different side to that which represented the Canaries yesterday. Allsopp, who was Luton's outside left at one time, was the only member of the team vanquished last September, but there were two of them, Smith and "Brown," playing for Luton. Cyril Dunning, who has recently turned professional, Reynolds and French represented the East Anglians against the "Strawbatters" at Norwich last Easter, but five of the team were new.

The Luton team included two surprises. In view of his displays in the practice matches it was generally thought that Potts would partner Hedley at back, but the old Leicester man was removed from right to left, and was partnered by Chapman. In making this choice the directors were probably influenced by the fact that Potts has suffered a severe bereavement in the death of his mother on Sunday, and is not ~~desirous~~ of playing until after the funeral, which takes place to-morrow. The other surprise was the appearance of Norwich City's old outside-right in his new name of Brown. Stansfield has recovered from his indisposition, but it was thought unwise to play him so soon, and "Brown" consented to fill the gap, although, as I announced on Monday, no arrangements have yet been made for his permanent engagement.

Mr. A. Adams, of Nottingham, was the referee, and the teams lined out as follow:—

Luton: Jarvis; Chapman and Hedley; F. Hawkes, Jones and R. Hawkes; Brown, Smith, Quinn, Moody and Johnson.

Norwich: Beale; Hampson and Reynolds; Wolsterholme, Bushell and French; Barnfather, Dunning, Ronaldson, Hubbard and Allsopp.

Bushell, the Canaries' new captain, triumphed over Bob Hawkes in the toss for ends and naturally enough chose to take what advantage the wind afforded. Defending the Town goal, Luton's back

division were early given opportunities of displaying their abilities, and Bob soon gave the visiting forwards an exhibition of his skill. It was due to clever play on his part that Luton's first attack was initiated, and the referee got into hot water with the crowd for giving Moody offside when he seemed likely to get through.

THE FIRST THRILL.

Two more free kicks to Norwich proved of little service to them, and then came the first thrill of the game. Receiving from Hedley, Moody burst through in fine style and sent out to his partner. Johnson got the better of a race with Hampson and letting fly first time gave Beale the first shot that he had to deal with. He saved in good style, but there was a bit of doubt as to the number of steps he took before he let go of the ball.

Brown, on the right, next had a try, and his centre was beaten down. Bob Hawkes sent him on the move again a minute later and he gave Smith a nice pass, but the inside man missed his footing and fell as he was in the act of shooting.

Clever head work was the outstanding feature of a good deal of mid-field play, and then Norwich had a substantial spell of attacking. Ronaldson missed a fine chance with an apology for a shot, and French just missed the mark with a powerful volley.

FOULS FREQUENT.

Free kicks for fouls were becoming monotonously frequent, the referee evidently being determined not to look over anything that appeared at all suspicious. Jones in particular came under his notice several times. Why will Abe play these irritating tricks? From one of the free kicks Bushell got in a nasty ground shot, but Jarvis fielded the ball very cautiously and cleared well. Hedley next distinguished himself by putting an end to a dangerous run by means of a back heeling kick which proved very effective. Very risky tactics for a back though!

The crowd roared when Abe was sinned against instead of the sinner. Fancy a foul being committed on Abe! He seemed to enjoy the situation as much as the spectators. Johnson and Qinn spoiled an opening through their hesitancy, and the Norwich right-wing transferred the play with a fast run, Jarvis having a nasty shot to deal with from Ronaldson. Dunning threatened danger and it was not an end when his shot passed across the goal mouth. Allsopp captured the ball and returned it to the right and Fred Hawkes appeared on the scene just in time to save a nasty situation.

GOOD RIGHT WINGS.

The right wings on both sides were showing admirable form, but as a whole the Norwich forwards were working better together than the homesters. Luton's half-line was, however, very sound, and thanks to this the homesters were holding their own.

'Brown' made good use of every opportunity afforded him and 'Ernie' will soon become popular with the Luton crowd. Fast and tricky he was always out manœuvring the opposing half and back, and once he had very bad luck in not scoring. Working close in he eluded an attempt by the back to foul him and essayed to lift the ball over Beale's head, but the goalkeeper held it against the upright and threw behind. The corner led to some exciting play in the goalmouth; Jones dispatched a "clinker" of a shot, but Smith timed his charge at the goalkeeper inaccurately, and had a free-kick given against him.

MOODY'S FINE EFFORT.

Just after this Moody had a slice of really bad luck in not succeeding with a brilliant effort. He met the ball from Hedley on the bounce and went through like a shot from a gun, and a flying shot was only inches out. The crowd cheered loudly after they had finished sighing.

Luton were now showing up well until they reached shooting range, when they lacked indecision. Quinn was a pronounced defaulter in this respect, and Johnson was not a great deal better. Hedley placed his side in danger by unsuccessfully essaying another of the fancy back-heeling kicks, and it was lucky Chapman was about. After Bushell had come near scoring, the Luton forwards got going again, and Johnson got in a couple of shots. One was a beauty, and the "goalie" had to throw away.

LUTON'S PENALTY.

The pressure was kept up, and two minutes from half-time Luton were awarded a penalty, Smith being illegally tackled by Wolstenholme close to goal. The crowd clamoured for Hedley to take the kick, and Captain Bob acquiesced. The choice was justified, the goalkeeper having no chance. The success was a great stimulus to the home players, and they were strenuously attacking when the whistle went for half-time with the score:—

LUTON	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
NORWICH	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0

When the players came out again Norwich set to work in earnest, but they had to be content with an unfruitful corner. Smith and Brown quickly transferred the scene of operations, and were frequently in the picture. Fred Hawkes came near succeeding with a shot which swerved just a little wide, and for some minutes the Canaries were penned in. Two or three off-side decisions against Luton incensed the crowd and matters were not improved when, after ten minutes' play, Norwich equalised.

THE EQUALISER.

The goal was quite an unexpected one. Following some pretty work by Barnfather and Dunning, the ball was sent across to the left, and, going to French, was returned. Barnfather captured it near the goal-line and screwed it into the centre. Jarvis came out to intercept it, but failed to get to it, and Dunning promptly had the leather in the net.

The fun now became fast and furious. First "Brown" and Smith were prominent, and then, with the Luton defence well up the field, the Norwich right got away. Hedley finely stopped the run, but Dunning regained the ball and skimmed the crossbar. Dunning had another go a minute later. His shot passed across the goal and gave Allsopp the chance of a lifetime, but he muddled it.

PRETTY PASSING.

After Beale had been called out twice to stop Moody and Johnson, the Norwich forwards exhibited some very pretty combination, and for some minutes Luton's prospects seemed very black. Hedley was the saviour, however, tackling and kicking in fine style. Still the danger was not at an end, and Hubbard at last got in a shot, to find Jarvis waiting for it.

LUTON'S STRONG FINISH.

In the last ten minutes Luton made a big bid for victory, and the play was very exciting. A fine individual effort by Smith deserved a better fate, and a nice centre from Brown was spoiled by a misunderstanding between Quinn and Johnson. Norwich once relieved the pressure, but Luton steadily worked, by the aid of throw-ins, and with the ball going to Bob Hawkes, Luton's captain gave Beale a rare handful.

Then Hedley had a try from about 40 yards out,

and it afforded the goalkeeper a good deal of anxiety. From a free kick well placed by Johnson, Quinn missed by inches with a header. Norwich once again got away, but Jones, after covering up a mistake of his captain's sent them back, and Smith twice tried to break through, but was brought down. A centre from "Ernie" grazed Quinn's head and passed out, and there was a loud appeal for "hands," when Reynolds got in the way of a shot from Bob Hawkes.

In the last two or three minutes the excitement was intense, the ball hovering round the Norwich goal. First there was a free kick for a foul on Brown, and the free kick was headed out for a corner. The corner kick was treated similarly, and the next was not so well placed, but Hedley returned the ball into goal. Quite a scramble went on, but the defence prevailed, and Norwich had broken up the attack when "time" was whistled, with the score:—

LUTON	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
NORWICH	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

A FAIR RESULT.

The result was justified by the play. On the whole Luton had rather more of the game than their opponents, but their forwards were not nearly so dangerous near goal. It would not be just to criticise too severely in an opening game, played on a wet and slippery ground, but I am only echoing a general opinion in calling into question the suitability of Quinn as centre forward. He lacks initiative, and the play of the inside men was in consequence hampered. "Brown" was the undoubted success of the front line and is a distinct acquisition. Smith played very nicely with him, although I cannot help thinking he is not quite at home at inside right. Moody was not as good as usual, though he did several smart things, and Johnson was at fault pretty frequently.

Bob Hawkes hardly seemed in his usual trim--I rather thought he got a nasty kick early in the game,—but otherwise the halves were very sound. Hedley was splendid at back. He is going to render Luton fine service. Jarvis in goal was quite safe.