

# FOOTBALL NOTES and NEWS

By "GOALPOST."

## SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

### LUTON TOWN DRAW WITH NORWICH CITY.

Luton's first match of the season opened on the Ivy-road enclosure on Wednesday with a visit from Norwich City, the result ending in a draw of one goal each. There was not a large crowd for the opening match, the spectators scarcely numbering more than three thousand, though no doubt this was in a large measure due to the drizzling rain of the late afternoon. In consequence of this, too, the turf was very slippery, and this was largely responsible for the absence of combination on both sides. Still, the ground at Luton is splendidly drained, and the water quickly runs off the surface.

For once, "Bob" Hawkes, who is again captain of the home team, lost the toss, and Norwich decided to take advantage of the existing elements. The sides were some time in settling down. Neither team could feel its feet, so to speak, for about a quarter of an hour. Then Luton began the attack, but their visit to Beale's charge was fruitless. Bushell set the Canaries going, and from that moment Norwich had the greater part of the play. The Blues' forwards made intermittent incursions into their opponents' territory, but never did anything that was really dangerous, save the first corner of the season, which was easily cleared.

Norwich, as stated, then took up the running, and attacked vigorously. Hedley, Luton's new left back, was some time in getting into his stride, and the visitors were not slow to take advantage of this temporary weakness. Barnfather and Dunning, who make up a powerful right wing in the Norwich team, were being fed repeatedly, with the result that Luton were very much on the defensive. Jarvis stopped some very good shots, and the Blues succeeded so far in avoiding disaster.

Matters began to level once more; Luton were more often Norwich's side of the half-line; and the locals were letting themselves go. There was an unusual "quantity" of offside, if one may be permitted to describe it so, consequently play was greatly robbed of its interest. The first half had all the appearance of being a pointless draw, when once more the unexpected happened. Luton were making a desultory attack on the Norwich citadel. Smith sent in a good shot, when Wolstenholme, probably more by accident than intention, touched the ball with his hand. A penalty was, of course, the sequel. Hedley took the shot, and sent the leather safely by Beale.

All good sportsmen must admit that after having had by far the better of the game, this was hard luck for Norwich. As Smith's shot was by no means a difficult one, Beale might have been trusted to have safely dealt with it. During the remaining five minutes to the interval Luton had an equal share of the game, and half-time arrived with the Blues leading by the odd goal.

Upon resuming, the Canaries, who showed slightly better staying powers than Luton, opened a vigorous attack, and more than once the home defence was in danger. Allsopp was giving Chapman no little trouble, but the back pluckily stuck to his man, and prevented the visitors' outside left getting in many a centre. It seemed as if Luton were resting on their laurels, and there were frequent calls from all parts of the ground of "Play up, Luton!" The home forwards were evidently feeling the strength of the Norwich half-line—Wolstenholme, Bushell, and French—and they were not able to get far away. Thus the home backs had to bear a greater strain.

It was during a skirmish in the home territory that Norwich drew level. The visitors' right wing got well down the field. Hedley had to admit defeat. Barnfather centred, and Dunning, in a kind of scramble, sent the ball by Jarvis into the net. The home custodian had no earthly chance, but "Bob," who was well placed at the time, ought surely to have cleared.

After this unexpected reverse, Luton really showed some of their form. To gain the lead, the homesters attacked vigorously. Beale saved good shots from Smith, Quinn, "Bob," and even from Hedley, in succession. However, nothing more fruitful than flag kicks were falling to the Blues' share. Still, the forwards maintained a hot fusillade of the Norwich goal. "Brown" missed the upright by inches, and Moody had extremely hard luck with one of his favourite "headers." The Canaries were indeed being severely pressed, but on the other hand it also showed what a good defence they had got. As a result they kept Luton out to the end, though for the last quarter of an hour it was apparent that they were but playing for a draw.

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After having witnessed the first League match of the season, one may be expected to give an opinion of the capabilities of the team as a whole, and of the individual players. How many are there who saw Wednesday's display would like to withhold that expression of opinion for the present? The writer is certainly one. Taken altogether, the play never rose to a high standard, and the little bits of excitement were very few. It was a kind of "slap-dash" game, in which the team that could hold out the longest might be expected to secure the victory. Before they may be expected to prove very effective, the home forwards will have to show some real combination.

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As should be the case with tried players, Smith, Quinn, and Moody were fair, but it is to be feared that both extreme wing men will constitute a weak point, in spite of the fact that we have known their capabilities. Jones spoiled his otherwise robust play with a number of unnecessary fouls. When the backs improve, as may confidently be expected, then the team should give a respectable account of itself. Taken altogether, Luton have an eleven that they need not be ashamed of. There may not be the same "classy combination" about it that has characterised teams of previous seasons, but every man appears a trier, and the least one can hope is that they will not finish up any worse than last season's team. Owing to various factors, the financial one not being overlooked, that position of affairs will be about as much as the supporters need reasonably expect.

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No one could really cavil at Wednesday's result. Possibly some might have thought the Blues were going to repeat last season's performance, when they beat Norwich by four goals to love. But, as was pointed out in this column last week, Luton had something to go against this time. I watched Norwich in a practice match at the Cathedral city the other afternoon, and the form shown contrasted sharply with that of last season's team. Thus, in making a draw on Wednesday, Luton did very well. It is just possible also that Norwich were quite as satisfied with the result.