

FOOTBALL NOTES and NEWS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON SEVERELY BEATEN AT NORTHAMPTON.

WRETCHED DISPLAY OF THE STRAWHATTERS.

Luton Town met with a severe defeat indeed at Northampton on Saturday, when they lost to the tune of six goals to one. This was almost a replica of the defeat which Luton suffered at the hands of Norwich, who early in the season beat us 6-0. About 500 took advantage of the excursion to Northampton, and of course a large majority were greatly disappointed at the result.

There were changes made on both sides. For Luton, Smith was unable to turn out, and Moody was shifted to the centre, Moore being brought in to fill the vacancy. Hedley was also still absent, and McCurdy and Chapman were at back. The home side played two reserve men.

"Bob" lost the toss. Northampton made the pace, and the game had every appearance of being fast. The locals adopted rushing tactics, and their short passing methods "came off." In less than five minutes, Walden, a Wellingborough youth, who played for the first time in the Southern League, opened the score, sending a hot shot into the net from close range.

But Luton were not disheartened, and with a swish they went down to the other end. Here Bonthron's fine work kept their attack bay, and the home quintet were speedily on the move. Lewis with a brilliant run gave the Luton defence an anxious moment, but Chapman got up to him just as he was shooting, and the ball went a trifle wide of the upright. Splendid headwork by Jones let the Luton left wing have a chance, but Thorpe twice saved, the first time at the expense of a corner. Walden cleverly got his head to the ball in front of Bob Hawkes, and it went over. The ball went to Walker, and thence to Whittaker. The centre-forward passed Jones and gave Freeman a rare opening. The left winger sent in a well-judged centre, but McCurdy managed to clear. By an almost similar effort, Walden was put into a scoring position, but Jarvis got to a rising ball and pulled it down.

Play was exceedingly fast and lively, and the symmetrical dash of the Cobblers' forwards was exceedingly good to watch. Of course, Northampton did not have matters all their own way, and once Quinn looked exceedingly dangerous, as from 20 yards' range he drove hard and true, only to find Thorpe in the way. Wykes came to the rescue at an opportune time when Brown and Quinn were unusually aggressive. Lewis had a grand chance of increasing the lead with a penalty kick. He had forced Chapman to the corner post where the back fell and handled while on the ground. The penalty was taken by Lewis. His first shot was repulsed, but the ball rebounded to him. Everyone expected there would be no mistake a second time, but, to the dismay of the spectators, "Spider," in the excitement of the moment, did not wait to steady himself, and shot over.

Northampton were holding their own very well, and had a number of chances, though difficult ones, of getting further ahead. Lewis put in a lovely shot after worming his way through, but Jarvis was in fine form and cleared magnificently. Then Whittaker had an opportunity, but with McCurdy pressing him he misjudged the height of the cross-bar. Freeman, although he was apparently offside, was allowed by the referee to swing down on the left, and his shot hit the outside of the net. Pretty work by Walden let the left wing again get down the field, but a right-foot shot from Freeman went badly astray.

Five minutes before half-time Lewis gained the goal there had been so much striving for. Walden was indirectly responsible, for he passed neatly to Walker, and that player, with beautiful judgment, sent over to Lewis. "Spider," who was twelve yards from goal, made no mistake this time. Luton paid a fleeting visit to the other end, and the Cobblers played magnificently to keep them out. Thorpe aided their efforts by fisting away from a flag kick. Half-time arrived with Northampton leading 2-0.

Resuming, another sensation happened in the first minute. Freeman got through by splendid dash, and Whittaker received his pass. The centre forward was scarcely in position, but he shot hard, and the ball rebounded from the foot of McCurdy to Walden who managed to reach it and put it into the net. The superiority of the Cobblers now became more marked, and for some time play was confined to the Luton territory. When the Cobblers got going it was pretty to watch the Northampton right wing. Walden simply made rings round Bob Hawkes. Manning was again conspicuous in the half line, and often broke up the combination of the opposing wing. Walden made his bag three, and the Cobblers four, with a brilliant piece of headwork. Freeman had forced a corner, and Walker took the kick. His centre came just above Walden's head, but the youngster put the ball smartly into the net.

This was a quarter of an hour after the restart. Next came a success for Luton. Their forward line showed fine combination, and with a dashing movement, Wykes was forced to concede a corner. Moody got his foot to the flag kick after the ball had hovered a moment round the goal, and beat Thorpe out of a melee of players. The Cobblers' fifth goal came two minutes later. It was Lewis who was instrumental, but his success was made possible by a well-judged pass from Walker, and the obvious fact that Jarvis had left the clearance to the backs, who little understood his intention. Luton were not at all disheartened by the reverses they were suffering, and played up pluckily. Two shots Thorpe dealt with in deliberately cool fashion, and Davies spoiled many of Moody's best efforts.

Brown was in decidedly hot form. A swinging oblique shot from the extreme wing would have beaten most goalkeepers, but Thorpe made no bones about it. In a deceptive light Bob Hawkes sent in a hot shot which looked like curling under the bar, but once more Thorpe gave nothing away. Whittaker had bad luck with a left foot drive which cannoned off the foot of one of the visiting backs. A swinging shot from Freeman was negotiated by Jarvis, and the goalie also turned aside a daisy cutter from Davies. Whittaker notched the sixth point two minutes from time, with a fast right foot drive, which gave Jarvis no chance. Result:—

Northampton, 6 goals; Luton, one goal.

Without doubt, Luton missed the services of Smith. Moody was useless at centre, and Moore was little better than a passenger. Northampton have a ripping defence, and the visiting forwards were beaten at most points of the game. The Luton quintette might have done better. When in front of goal they either tried to do all the work individually, or they dallied too long. Jones was the player who stood head and shoulders above all the others in the Luton team. Fred Hawkes played consistently, but "Bob" was off colour, so much so that at times he was made to look ridiculous. There is little doubt about it—Luton's defence really lost them the game. McCurdy and Chapman were generally beaten by the Northampton forwards, and after the first reverse Jarvis was completely at sea. What a terrible contrast to his exhibition the previous Saturday. Unless they are aided by luck, Luton will never do much with their present defence.