

FOOTBALL NOTES and NEWS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

WEST HAM v. LUTON.

A VICTORY FOR LUTON.

Luton have been going "great guns" since just before the Easter holidays, winning practically everything before them. If the Tower commenced the season rather badly, the players are evidently determined to finish up well. Of course, the men have the end of the season in view, coupled with a not too rosy outlook so far as the club itself is concerned. But the men have created such a record lately that none of them need be anxious for the future. Having won so many matches in succession, Luton are just now the surprise of the Southern League, and their doings have naturally created much comment in football circles.

Their latest victory was at Upton Park on Saturday, when they succeeded in defeating West Ham by the odd goal in three. The "Hammers" occupy such a respectable position in the League, that they might be expected to hold their own at least on their own pitch. But the United were not only beaten on goals, but they were beaten on the play. Luton gave the finest performance all through, especially in attack, though the home side were a trifle superior in defence. Indeed if it had not been for the fact that West Ham possess two sterling backs in Shreeve and Fairman, Luton must have put up a huge score against them.

The sides were at full strength, "Bob" being back in his place in the Luton ranks. Though the turf was nice and hard, a strong wind rather interfered with play. The locals kicked off, but both sides were some time in settling down. At length Caldwell tested Jarvis with a long low drive, but the shot gave little difficulty to the Luton custodian, and the Blues taking up the running put in a smart bit of work which gained them an unproductive corner, a feat which the "Hammers" copied a moment later. Some scrambling play followed, at the end of which Curtis got the ball well out, and put it into the net, whilst the Luton men stood still, appealing for off-side.

After this the "Hammers" had the best of matters for a time, and Curtis had a fine chance of adding another point, but failed badly. A breakaway by Luton followed, and Smith had a clear run before beating Geggus with a low fast shot.

With matters again even the game livened up a bit, but there was not a lot of good football, the men showing quite the orthodox end-of-season lassitude. A free kick to Luton was driven over the bar by R. Hawkes, and then Curtis made a wild pass which spoilt a capital move.

After a prolonged struggle in the home team's goal mouth, the "Hammers" broke away, and the Luton goalkeeper had to give away a corner to keep out Ashton's shot. The "Hammers" were now combining well, and made repeated runs down the field in line. Shea was especially noticeable for some tricky work, but the finishing touches were very weak. Bob Hawkes set his forwards off with a long kick, and Geggus had three times to save long shots.

The game was very even, but the "Hammers" were too individual in their work to be as effective as their midfield work warranted. Luton then made a rush to the other end, and after Geggus had saved once, he was rushed into the net with the ball by Quinn and Brown. At half-time Luton led by 2 goals to 1.

Resuming, Shea was the first to break the monotony, but after he had wriggled along a bit he was closed. Luton then had a turn, Bob Hawkes putting his forwards into going order with a long pass to Quinn. A slip by Shreeve helped them along, but Smith put an end to their hopes by sending yards wide and behind. A smart tackle by Whiteman, followed by a clever pass to Ashton, enabled the home side to get away. The ball was swung over to Blackburn, but his shot was charged down before Jarvis could get to the ball.

After this the game simmered down a bit, and operations were now confined to midfield. From here the home side got away, and Curtis sent in a grand shot, which Jarvis did well to keep out. The visitors replied with a smart move, and Geggus had to leave his goal in order to get the ball into a safe place. Both sides raised the pace after this, and the back division had to get through their hardest work of the game so far.

Once Fairman saved his side from disaster by taking the ball from Smith, who had got close in after beating two attempts to stall him off. As time drew near the visitors made great efforts to increase their lead. Shreeve and Fairman, however, in the "Hammers' " back division, were too good for the attack, and kept a lot of work off Geggus, he only having a few long-range shots to deal with.

Result: Luton 2 goals, West Ham 1.

Thus on both occasions when they met this season, Luton have managed to beat the "Hammers." Last season the points were divided, West Ham winning at home 4-0, but losing at Luton 0-1.

In spite of their series of wins lately, Luton are well down in the League. They had a lot of leeway to make up, and even if they beat Portsmouth on Saturday, they will doubtless finish in what is known as the "bottom" half of the League. Still, considering all things, the Blues have done very well this season.
