

Football Notes and News,

By "The Goalie."

LUTON AT SOUTHEND.

ADMINISTER A SEVERE DEFEAT TO THE HOME TEAM.

TOP OF THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE!

At last Luton's proverbial ill-luck seems to have changed; and the sterling merit of the team—especially of the forward line—aiding and abetting the new order of things, the Town team has actually climbed to the top of the Southern League!

The tables were published for the first time this week, and it came as a surprise to most Southern League towns, though not to many Lutonians, to find the team from Strawopolis right at the very top—a most unusual and correspondingly gratifying position for them. There is not even a second team with the same number of points; Luton is the only team in the League to have won in both its opening canters and to have registered 4 points in its favour so early in the season.

Naturally, there is great jubilation among football lovers in the town and district. The prospect opened up by these early successes is very bright, if only the team can maintain their form. And to do them justice, they seem very safe in this direction also. Already I can imagine the Club Directors rubbing their hands and chuckling over the prospect of a spell of successes and big gates at last, and already one thinks of that troublesome adverse balance in the finances of the Club being wiped off this year. Already, too, one dreams of a big Cup run at last, with swelling receipts and great enthusiasm; and—but enough's said. One hopes for much, and the team is showing form that promises great things; but now it is a question of—wait and see!

The Luton men deserve every credit for their play on Saturday. The result—a win of 4 to 1—was not a victory of luck; they thoroughly deserved their success. Indeed, one of the London morning papers said that if Luton had run their score up to six goals they would but have had the reward of their superiority. Another of the said morning papers described "Freddy" Hawkes as the best man on the field. And still another talked of "those breezy, quick-footed forwards of Luton." And one more—we don't want to make the members of the team blush!—said: "A team that can score four goals away from home must be marked dangerous."

As a matter of fact, Luton were the only Southern League away team to win on Saturday; and they were the only team in the three principal Leagues of the country to score four goals. To state some more records—and we may as well have them, for we have not always had the chance in the past!—Luton is the only team in the South with seven goals in their favour, and the only team in the three Leagues with seven goals to their credit for two matches.

Still another record—I believe I am correct in this—falls to the credit of one of Luton's individual players. Moody holds the honour of having scored the highest number of goals of any forward in the three Leagues so far this season. He did the hat tick on Saturday. I think my comments of a week or two ago on this player are very fully justified, and even sooner and more conclusively than I expected. The only change in the team was at half-back, where Johnson played at centre in place of Bushell, owing to the latter's badly damaged thumb. Johnson's play was very satisfactory.

Of the rest of the team, it must be said—as indeed the score shows—that all played exceedingly well. The forwards were very strong. Smith doing finely, and the wings even better. The half-back line was very safe, “Bob” and his namesake playing a capital game; and the backs also played a greatly improved game, Potts in particular kicking very cleanly. Naisby was not exactly overworked on Saturday, but he proved himself in fine form in one or two moments of danger.

One other feature of the play also emphasizes and bears out my remarks of last week—the team's form in the second half. Against Southampton nearly a fortnight ago they were a goal down at half-time, and yet afterwards, although playing against a good wind, they converted what looked like defeat into well-deserved victory. On Saturday at Southend the score at half-time was level at one all; but after the interval they played up better than ever, and put on three more goals to their opponents' nil. The fact is a credit to the men themselves, and also to their trainer, “Billy” Lawson, who certainly deserves more than a word of praise.

Of Saturday's game little need be said, beyond what has been stated. The team is too well known to need repeating again now, but Johnson replaced Bushell at centre-half. Southend played Harwood, an amateur, instead of Lavers, and were disappointed in the change. During the first half the home team had practically as much of the play as did the visitors, and at the end of half an hour they got a lead of one goal, Dunn making the score.

They held the lead but for a very short time, however; for scarcely a minute later the Luton forwards swung off towards goal, the right wing fired in. Clark ran out to clear, and was hustled off the ball, and Moody banged the leather into the net. With the scores level at one each the whistle blew, but after half-time Moody and Quinn scored two more goals.

Then Stansfield put across a centre from which Moody again scored, completing the hat trick and securing a great ovation from the two hundred or more Lutonians who saw the match. Just on time Naisby made a fine save from Dunn. The game closed with the score:

LUTON 4 goals, SOUTHEND 1.