

Football Notes and News.

By "The Goalie."

LUTON AT NEW BROMPTON.

AN UNLUCKY DEFEAT.

Luton met with their first reverse this season on Saturday at New Brompton, losing to the home team by 2 goals to 1. Already the croakers are out on the growl, and are saying that Luton's little "flash in the pan" is all over, and that now we shall find our "proper level" again somewhere near the foot of the table.

But I am not of the tribe of the pessimist; and I hope I have a little more sportsmanship than to support the team only when they are winning successes. If I may be allowed to give some of the Town's supporters a gentle rub, they are a little too apt to shout for the side only when it is winning, and to stay away and run a team down all they can when it is losing. A decent sportsman would support and encourage his men all the more when they met with reverses.

In this connection I am reminded that Millwall is coming to Luton on Saturday. Some of us remember their visit last year, with hundreds of their supporters in their train, and all "singing" lustily that slow-pitched dirge, "Play—up—Mill—wall," that must, I should think, have the effect of moving the players to desperate efforts and sinking opponents' hearts into their boots, as the saying goes. Most of the spectators smiled when some enthusiast at one of Luton's games a week or two ago rang a bell vigorously in celebration of home successes; but it seems to me it would not be a bad idea for the crowd to adopt some such concerted method as Millwall's for encouraging and inspiring their men and putting more life into the game.

After all, Luton's loss on Saturday was not a dishonourable one, though doubtless many had great hopes. But for much of the game we played one man short, and that man Smith at centre-forward, upsetting the balance of the whole team. Moreover, New Brompton is a team that is very rarely defeated at home. They simply revel in breaking "away win" records of club after club in the South. And, too, one cannot expect a team to be always at highest pitch; in the nature of things they must fall away a little sometimes. Lutonians must be glad their team has done so well till now, and still promises to keep up so high an average form; and they must support the Blues even in losing a game or two.

Even in losing, Luton have still kept up the regular weekly record which I have had the pleasure of chronicling in my report of each match played. This time the record lies in the number of goals scored; the Luton men have 16 to their credit, while no other team in the three principal Leagues has come near this, and no team in the South has yet reached double figures. This is a credit indeed; and considering all these points, and the fact that New Brompton certainly had much luck in Saturday's game, I think I am entitled to ask—in all confidence of the usual loud and emphatic rejoinder—"Are we downhearted?"

The teams lined up as follows:—

Luton: Naisby; Chapman and Potts; F. Hawkes, Johnson, and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Macdonald, Smith, Moody, and Stansfield.

New Brompton: Holmes; Sutherland and Nobbs; Mahon, Strang, and Higgins; Reynolds, Taylor, Court, Cannon and Pickett.

Referee: Mr. A. W. McQueen, Catford.

There had been much questioning whether Smith and Moody would be able to play at all; but as it was impossible to play Quinn, and Macdonald was required to replace him, the other two had perforce to be played if they could walk at all, as there are no other men to put in the posts. There was a record crowd for New Brompton of over 6,000.

Luton kicked off against a brilliant sun, and Naisby early exhibited his skill. A fast spell of play saw both goals alternately in danger, but the visitors for a while had the majority of the play. The centres put in by the Luton wingers were a fine feature of the game. Smith gave a pass to Moody, and "Bert" without a moment's hesitation banged the leather towards the goal. The shot went a little too high, but so hard did Moody kick that the ball on striking the cross-bar rebounded nearly 20 yards back down the field. The visitors had the hardest luck imaginable in not getting a score with this brilliant effort of Moody's.

From a corner kick Reynolds placed the ball so nicely that it simply fell on to Pickett's chest and glanced off into the goal. New Brompton thus opened the scoring with a goal in which there was certainly a big element of luck. Soon afterwards Smith in kicking the ball somehow hurt his knee again, and the old injury becoming troublesome he had to retire for quite 20 minutes. The Luton attack was thus badly weakened, and though the Blues made strenuous attempts to equalise, the interval came with the home team leading by the only goal scored.

After the half Naisby made several grand saves, but in the main Luton had the majority of the play. Three minutes after the re-start Brown sped away in one of his fast wing movements, and suddenly twisted the ball away right from the corner into the goal. It dropped beautifully, and the "screw" on it in falling caused it to drop well over Holmes' head into the opposite corner of the net. The visiting team thus drew level.

Brown, who had thus "broken his duck" in Southern League football this season, nearly repeated the trick a few minutes later with a similar shot. Two attempts by Macdonald and "Bob" were nullified in the luckiest manner possible for the home men, and again a little later Stansfield all but obtained the lead Luton was striving so hard for. Then, only a minute from time, Taylor scored the winning goal for the homesters.

Result: New Brompton 2, Luton 1.