

Football Notes and News.

By "THE GOALIE."

LUTON DRAW WITH WEST HAM.

Luton drew with West Ham on Saturday in a fast and strenuous game on the Ivy-road ground, the score being one goal each. The result is a fair indication of the game. On the whole the boys in Blue showed themselves better in attack and whenever near goal than their opponents; but the Hammers played a more scientific game, the whole team—and especially the front string — showing some pretty combined work at times, while their defence was great.

The home men certainly had very hard luck in not finding the net at least three times more than they did. Smith scored an offside goal; but twice Moody only missed the bar and the upright by the merest shave. On another occasion from a hard drive by Smith Kitchen partially saved, and the ball bounced on the ground. To re-capture it and clear Kitchen had to turn right round in goal and put out his hands, and I am of opinion that Referee Marshall (of Kettering) should have allowed the home team a point.

Instead, after wavering for a moment and then consulting both the linesmen (at least one of whom was yards away down the field at the moment) the referee gave a decision against the home team. Moody got hurt in an effort to make this attempt at scoring a sure one, but he quickly recovered his customary agility. On still another occasion, Bob Hawkes took a foul kick from just outside the penalty line; and he dropped the ball obliquely within an inch of the corner of the posts, so near that the crowd was already yelling "Goal" when they saw the ball falling yards away from the net.

On the other hand, it must also be admitted that the West Ham team were twice unlucky. The only goal they scored was obtained when Naisby had run out of goal. At another point Naisby had again run out, but was beaten by the visitors' left wingers; and one of the latter had a shot at goal from only a few yards away. Chapman had run towards the goal, however; and when actually on the line and facing into the goal, he leaned backwards, caught the ball on his foot, and kicked it back over his shoulder well away out of danger, collapsing backwards as he did so.

This was a really splendid clearance, and by far the finest thing Chapman has done for Luton yet. I do not want to give the impression that I am blaming Naisby. Undoubtedly but for his grand display between the sticks on Saturday—as indeed always—we should have been both goals and points down, instead of getting one of each up. He made at least half a dozen brilliant saves, including one from a penalty kick, from Caldwell, Shea, and others for the visitors.

The Luton team have now fallen from the premier position in the Southern League, but I am not in the least downhearted. For the lads in Blue to have kept such a position for seven weeks running is an achievement of which they may well be proud; and a fall for at least a time is only to be expected, whatever the leaders' form may be. At any rate, we are in good company in this matter, considering what has happened to the erstwhile leaders of the other two principal competitions also! Moreover, even so I have not yet given up chronicling records notched by the team—I have not failed to give one or more they have captured for every match they have played so far this season.

This week's record—apart from the fact that it is a record over many years for the Luton team and I believe for any team to hold top place in the Southern League tourney throughout the first seven matches of the season—lies again in the number of goals the team has scored. Their total, 21 goals for, is still easily a record for the three principal Leagues in the kingdom.

We must expect, I suppose—though we can still hope otherwise—that Luton will drop a little farther down the table probably during the next few weeks; for “our boys” have a stiff spell in front of them. Indeed, we have only one match at home during the next six weeks, and not even a first team fixture of any kind unless one of the F.A. Cup games or a friendly falls to our lot in Luton. But I think it is safe to prophecy that after Christmas we shall go up again with a run; and if we do not finish as Champions of the Southern League—a thing which Lutonians seem to think of with bated breath, as of something which is greatly to be desired but quite impossible to be reached—we shall I think nevertheless finish the season in a better position than we have attained for many a year past.

Luton's team on Saturday was again up to full strength, but the visitors were without Piercey, Massey, and Curtis. The teams were:

Luton: Naisby; Chapman, Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, R. Hawkes; Brown, Smith, Quinn, Moody, Stansfield

West Ham: Kitchen; Lavery, Fairman; Whiteman, Woodards, Randall; Ashton, Shea, G. W. Webb, Blackburn, Caldwell.

Referee: Mr. R. Marshall, Kettering.

Luton kicked off against the wind. The visitors at once proved dangerous, and for a while the opposing forward line took it in turns to attack. Shea took an early penalty for hands, and drove hard and straight at goal, but Naisby saved well. Caldwell proved a remarkably speedy runner, and was not sufficiently well covered throughout the game. Potts was hurt, but played on. The home right wing made some promising movements, and with the left also obtained quite a number of corners, but they all came to nothing, and the teams crossed over at half time with no score.

Not long after the re-start the Hammers' left wing broke away in good style. Naisby ran out to capture the ball, but Caldwell was too quick for him, and reaching the ball first passed to Shea, who scored easily with an open goal. Less than ten minutes from the close the home team equalised. Stansfield got away and passed to Moody, who sent the ball on to Smith, and the latter scored beautifully from close in. Afterwards there were several moments of danger at both ends, but there was no further score, and the game closed with the result:—

LUTON 1, WEST HAM 1.