

Football Notes and News.

BY "THE GOALIE."

LUTON AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

ANOTHER FEAT.

The Crystal Palace team have been going so strongly of late—they are at the top of the Southern League table—that Luton's chances of obtaining a point, much less two, on Saturday, were regarded as somewhat remote. There were certainly a few optimists when the half-time result came through, showing Luton to be leading, but in the second half the defence wavered for ten minutes, with the result that the home team scored three goals. But for the good form of Naisby, the score might have been heavier.

It is rather interesting, though somewhat disconcerting, to compare the record of the first six weeks of the season, with that of the last. They are as follows:—

	Pld.	Won.	Lost.	Dwn.	Pts.
First 6 weeks...	8	5	1	2	12
Last 6 weeks...	6	0	5	1	1

It is but fair to state, however, that only one of these six games has been played at home. Luton have now much easier matches to play, and I venture to predict that before very long they will again be near the head of the League table.

The day was cold and dreary, rain falling heavily when the teams took the field, and as a result the crowd hardly numbered more than 4,000. Playing with the wind the home team at once set up a vigorous attack, and in the opening ten minutes, Naisby had as many shots to deal with. In each case, however, he fielded the muddy ball with splendid confidence, and this remark applies with particular force to a couple of shots sent in by Garrett and Hewitt. After the visiting defence had survived the first shock of pressure it was able to give more attention to the front rank, and one soon realised that Luton had a dashing lot of fellows to lead the attack. Brown, on the right wing, was repeatedly catching the eye of the crowd, and on one occasion his centre only just missed conversion by a mere accident.

As the game wore on the ground began obviously to tell on the men, who had unusual trouble in keeping their feet, but, considering the state of the turf, the home forwards did a lot of excellent shooting with a leaden ball, and Luton were mostly on the defensive. On the other hand the Luton team were always dangerous in their sudden breakaways, Smith and Moody being very prominent. It was the last-named who called upon Johnson to save an awkward long shot, but the most exciting moment of the half was a grand run by Hewitt. For one brief moment it looked as if the old Albion man would beat all opposition, but Naisby rushed out and took the ball off his toe.

Now Luton pressed, and took three corners, off the last of which Smith scored for the visitors with a hook shot close in. On the play this lead was not quite deserved, and the Palace made desperate efforts to prove the form all wrong, but Naisby continued to keep goal in masterly style, and he kept all comers at bay to the interval, when Luton led the way by 1 goal to 0. Smith's goal was the seventh he has scored for Luton this season, and he will soon be challenging Moody, who has ten to his credit.

About three minutes from the resumption the efforts of the Palace were rewarded, amid a loud burst of cheering. Beating the defence, although hampered on either side, Hewitt passed out to Garrett, and that player, returning the ball, saw Spottiswoode put it into the net at close quarters. Soon afterwards Naisby saved a great shot from Garrett, and then Woodhouse beat him a second time as a result of Garrett's centre.

More excitement followed when Hughes, recovering from Myers, added a third goal, Naisby having thus been defeated three times in ten minutes. The rain now ceased, and the Palace, taking a couple of corners, were having nearly all the game. At the end of twenty-five minutes in this half Spottiswood suffered a bad collision with an opponent, and had to be carried off the field. The loss of a forward, however, made little difference to the Palace, who pressed heavily during the greater part of the second half. The result was—Crystal Palace, 3; Luton, 1.