

Football Notes and News.

BY "THE GOALIE."

LUTON SURPRISE COVENTRY.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF FOOTBALL.

In the first round of the English Cup Competition Proper Northampton beat Luton by four clear goals, but Coventry won at Sheffield. Then, according to all the well established rules of logic and common sense, Coventry should defeat Luton with the greatest of ease. The London dailies took this view, and all predicted an easy journey for Coventry. Therefore it can only be described as rank impertinence on Luton's part to confound the critics and to set the laws of logic at naught by robbing Coventry of a point,—and the offence is aggravated by the fact that the visitors fully deserved to win.

The Luton forwards were on their best behaviour, and had very hard luck in not netting the ball more than once. On one occasion, first Stansfield and then Quinn crashed the ball against the cross-bar, and all through the game the Luton forwards gave the home defence an exciting time of it. Luton held the lead at half-time and kept it until right near the close. It would be a good thing for the "Strawplaiters"—as they are often called—if the game could be a shortened by a few minutes, for quite a large number of points have been lost by a goal scored against them in the closing stages of the game.

Luton's goal was scored by Smith, who has now netted on ten occasions in Southern League games this season. Moody has scored fourteen times, and unless he bucks up, he will soon be challenged by the centre-forward. On the whole, however, the forwards have fallen off to a great extent from their excellent form at the beginning of the season, but the defence has greatly improved. On Saturday the Coventry forwards were quite eclipsed, the visiting half-backs playing a splendid game, and the backs kicking well. Naisby,—well—was Naisby. In the last five matches (three away from home), Luton have had only four goals scored against them, and instead of possessing the unenviable record of having had more goals scored against them than any other team, we find that Bristol Rovers, New Brompton, Southend, Watford, and Coventry have a larger number in the goals against column.

The ground at Coventry was in splendid condition, and 8,000 spectators witnessed the game. Johnson deputised for Bob Hawkes, and Potts played in Chapman's place. Coventry had their Cup team out, and were given an enthusiastic reception. The visitors attacked strongly from the start, but Saul and Barnacle set up a good defence, and after a time the Coventry forwards got away, but were given offside. By some very clever passing, the Luton quintette made their way to the other end and set up a regular bombardment, having very hard luck in not scoring. First Stansfield hit the bar and then Quinn, taking the rebound, had the misfortune to repeat the performance, the goalkeeper at the time being hopelessly beaten.

After twenty minutes of the first half had elapsed, Luton's efforts were rewarded. Fred Hawkes headed the ball to Smith, who was excellently placed, and the latter was able to beat Evans with a sharp crisp shot into the bottom corner of the net. Coventry had a little more of the game after this, but the visiting halves were in fine form, and rarely allowed them to get within shooting range. One shot from Parkes went wide and the home team claimed that in clearing from Tickle, Naisby carried the ball over the line. The referee, however, disallowed the claim after consulting with the linesmen, and at the interval the score was Luton 1, Coventry 0.

Coventry opened the second half vigorously, but they could not break down the visitors' strong defence, Wightman especially clearing well. — Smith, the Coventry centre-forward, was heavily charged by Wightman, and had to be carried off the field. For a time the home team played with four forwards, and Tickle lost a good opening by shooting straight at Naisby. The home attack lacked that fire and precision that was so noticeable in the Luton forwards, and the latter held the game well in hand. The half-back line was practically impregnable and Stansfield and Brown, being judiciously fed, gave the Coventry defence plenty of work to do.

During a brief attack by Coventry, Tickle shot towards the goal, but Naisby easily cleared. Evans, however, had to be on his best behaviour to save shots from Smith and Stansfield. Both shots had a considerable amount of "screw" on them, and the goalkeeper did well to keep them out. Towards the close Coventry unexpectedly equalised. Naisby ran out to clear from Smith, and before he could get safely back into the goal, Buckle scored. Both teams tried hard to obtain the winning goal, but nothing more was scored. The result was, therefore:—

COVENTRY 1, LUTON 1.