

Football Notes and News.

BY "THE GOALIE."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

AN UNLUCKY DEFEAT AT NORTHAMPTON.

JACK SHARP AND LUTON SPECTATORS

If there is one team above all others that Luton would like to defeat, that team is Northampton, who broke the Blues' home record and dismissed them from the English Cup. The two teams have always been great rivals, but recent events have tended to make this rivalry even still keener. The Lutonians made a great effort to turn the tables on their doughty opponents, but luck was against them, and although even Northampton people admitted that they deserved at least a point, they were defeated by 3-1. Northampton are therefore the first team this season to take four points from Luton, a performance they also accomplished last season.

The whole team played well, Potts in particular doing good work. He is one of the most plucky, daring backs playing in the Southern League, and believes in a vigorous, but fair, charge. His methods rather displeased the Northampton spectators, and for the greater part of the game, Potts had to submit to a certain amount of "barracking" from the crowd. Football crowds are alike all through the country, in spite of Jack Sharp's anonymous correspondent in the "Football Evening News." This gentleman had occasion to visit Luton, and took the opportunity of watching the game between Luton and Norwich City. He complains that certain members of the crowd used very bad language, the worst that he had ever heard on a football ground.

I don't doubt that he did hear some bad language, — there are, unfortunately, black sheep in most families,—but why he should tar all Luton spectators with the same brush is past comprehension. If he had been at the Reserves' match on Saturday, he would have seen something much more pleasing, and much more characteristic of Luton spectators. There were many pieces of good play worthy of applause, but when McDiarmid ran through on his own, and gave the visitors a two goal lead with a grand shot, every spectator gave him a cheer. Was not that the act of sportsmen?

An unfortunate incident marred the opening of the game, for Potts, in tackling Walden, Northampton's diminutive outside right, accidentally wrenched the forward's ankle rather badly. The game was delayed for some time, and Walden had to receive further attention even when play was resumed. The spectators constantly urged the referee to turn the Luton back off the field, but the official, of course, merely awarded a free kick. For the first quarter of an hour, the play was somewhat tame, and neither side could claim much advantage. The first serious shot for goal was made by Bob Hawkes, but the ball rebounded from one of the half-backs, and at the other end, Manning hit the cross-bar.

A hard, characteristic, ground drive from Moody was saved in fine style by Thorpe, but gradually the home team began to force the game, and for the rest of the first half had much the better of the play. Bradshaw missed an easy chance through shooting too high, but, at last, the opening goal came, and in a rather unexpected fashion. Lewis sent in a long shot which touched Wightman, and apparently twisted away, like a breaking cricket ball, from Naisby, just as the goalkeeper was shaping to pick it up. This encouraged Northampton to greater efforts, and before long Lessons ran the ball past the backs, and, swerving by Naisby as the latter ran out to meet him, placed the ball into the open goal. At the interval the score was:—Northampton 2, Luton 0.

The second half was as much in Luton's favour as the first was in Northampton's. Thorpe was kept very busy, and at one time Quinn seemed certain to score after the ball had rebounded from the cross-bar, but to the relief of the spectators, he managed to place it over the bar. Brown, judiciously fed by Quinn, was doing good work on the right, and it was from his centres that most danger was threatened. At last, Luton were rewarded. Fred Hawkes placed the ball into the goal mouth, and Smith cleverly diverted it past Thorpe. This is the 16th goal that Smith has scored this season, and he is now only one behind Moody.

This success urged the Lutonians on to even greater efforts, and Northampton had still to act on the defensive. By skilful passing and plenty of dash, the visiting forwards fairly made rings round the home team, and Thorpe's charge was being continually bombarded. Right up to the last minute of the match, Luton kept up the attack, and it was this that proved their undoing. The efforts of the whole team were so concentrated on obtaining the equaliser that the Northampton forwards were ignored, and when at last the ball was kicked out to Walden, he had a clear field before him. He ran the ball down down the wing, and then centred to Lessons, who scored the Cobblers' third goal. Time came a moment later with the score:—

NORTHAMPTON 3, LUTON 1.