

# Football Notes and News.

BY "THE GOALIE."

## SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

### A FRUITLESS VISIT TO THE WEST

#### EXETER EXCEL.

Luton Town visited Exeter on Saturday, but were unfortunate enough to find the City in irresistible form, with the result that they were beaten by four goals to two. Exeter City began the present season in a very inauspicious manner, and at one time it appeared that they would have to fight hard to prevent relegation to the second division. About two months ago, however, they startled the football world by defeating the great Swindon on the latter's ground, and since then, they have steadily improved their position, and are now just above Luton in the League table. Last season Luton won the corresponding match by 2-1, but in view of the City's recent performances, a similar result was only expected by the most optimistic of the Club's followers.

For once in a way, Mr. C. Green, the Club secretary, was unable to accompany the team, having gone up North on business connected with the securing of a new centre forward, and Mr. Ernest Gibbs therefore had charge of the team. Another notable absentee was Bob Hawkes, who was prevented from making the long journey by business. Bob, by the way, captained the Hertfordshire team in their match against Surrey at Norbiton, on Wednesday. Fred Hawkes was captain of the team, and the vacancy at left-half was filled by Lashbrooke, who generally figures in the forward line. Exeter City also made two changes, but these were through recognised first team men being re-included after being absent through injuries.

In spite of the continued success of the home team, only 4,000 spectators turned out to see the match. Exeter's gates are, on the whole, slightly less than Luton's, a sum of £118 being realised by the latter at the match with Brighton on the previous Saturday. The Exeter spectators are some of the best sportsmen going, for they recognised and evidently appreciated Luton's efforts to regain lost ground. Three times during the match the visitors were two goals in arrears, but on two occasions they rallied desperately, and reduced the deficit to a single goal. Luton were severely handicapped by an injury to Lashbrooke in the first half, and although he resumed playing after the interval, he was obviously not himself.

Except for the period when Lashbrooke was off the field, Luton were quite as good as their opponents, and two of the goals scored against them in the first half were of a very lucky character. A draw would have been the fairest result for both teams. Brown and Moody were not only the best forwards on the Luton side, but were practically the best on the field, and Walker was also prominent at times. Johnson showed plenty of dash, but it would have been much better to have played him at left half, with Lashbrooke at centre. Potts was responsible for some fine defensive work, and he seems to improve with every game. Exeter were best served by Garside and Bell in the forward line, although the defence was the strongest part of the team.



Exeter's ground is one of the most exposed football pitches in the Southern League, and the game was to a certain extent marred by a strong gale, which was free, however, from the snow which made football so unpleasant elsewhere. Exeter had the assistance of the wind in the first half, and naturally they had most of the play. For the first few minutes they kept the ball in the visitor's half of the field, but they rarely looked like scoring on account of the hustling tactics of Wightman and Potts. When the Luton forwards got away they were much more dangerous than the opposing quintette, and their clever footwork created quite a good impression on the Exeter folk. Some of the delightful passing for which they have become noted this season, gave Johnson an opportunity to dash for goal, but Whittaker reached the ball first and cleared.

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When the City did eventually take the lead, it was in a lucky and unsatisfactory manner, a penalty being given against Wightman for alleged handling. The Blues protested vigorously against this, as it seemed to have been one of the home forwards who committed the offence, but the referee turned a deaf ear to their request that he should consult the linesman, and the kick was taken by Evans, who easily scored. This incident acted as a spur for the home team, until Walker and Brown changed the venue by an excellent combined run, which ended in Brown sending the ball just over the bar. As a matter of fact the ball would have gone through, had not Whittaker jumped up and touched it. Exeter then recommenced the attack, and for fifteen minutes the visitors were very hard pressed.

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Luton then began to do their share, and Stansfield and Brown put in some delightful runs, while Bushell only just missed with a fine drive. The accident to Lashbrooke then gave Exeter an opportunity, and about a quarter of an hour before the interval, Pratt beat Naisby with a great shot from about twenty yards range. In about a minute, Bushell, who plays in exactly the same position as Pratt, also scored with a great shot from Stansfield's centre. Exeter then scored one of the luckiest goals that have ever beaten a goalkeeper. Naisby dashed out to clear and kicked the ball away. It struck Garside on the head, however, and rolled between the posts before the goalkeeper could regain his position. Garside was laid out, but as the interval was near, this did not much handicap the City, who were then leading by 3-1.

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During the second half, Luton were practically the only team in the picture, and set up attack after attack. The Exeter goal experienced two narrow escapes, but after ten minutes play, Moody scored with a hard drive from a centre by Brown. After this an equaliser seemed certain, but the home team were favoured by luck and managed to keep the ball out of the goal. Luton were not so lucky, however, for during a breakaway, Bell scored the City's fourth goal from close range. Luton again acted on the aggressive, and were continually attacking for the rest of the game. Nothing further was scored, however, and Exeter were considerably flattered by the final score :—

Exeter 4, Luton 2.