

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

LUTON EXTEND THE LEADERS.

THE UNDEFEATED RANGERS LUCKY TO WIN.

A GREAT GAME.

Previous to Saturday, there were only two undefeated teams in the Southern League. Swindon and Queen's Park Rangers. The former were beaten, however, by Watford, who played a splendid game against the champions, and had Luton experienced the luck they deserved, the other team, too, would have lost their record. As it was, the visitors were beaten by 2-0, but were certainly not disgraced, and the Rangers owe their victory to some wonderful goalkeeping by Shaw, and also to the one-sided manner in which Dame Fortune distributed her favours. The performance of the Luton team was certainly a revelation to the London spectators, for after their favourites' recent performances, they expected them to simply romp home. But Luton's position in the lower half of the table is a very false one, and if they maintain their present form, they should surprise many teams, as they surprised Brentford and Leyton.

The game attracted 13,000 spectators, and they saw what was agreed on all hands to be some of the best football that has been served up by any Southern League teams this season. In the first half, Luton were "top dogs" for the greater part of the time, and a blank score sheet at the interval was more than the home team deserved. The second half was more even, and two goals against Naisby enabled the homesters to gain their sixth victory in seven matches. Twice in the first five minutes Shaw scooped the ball from under the bar, and in the second instance it would not have been surprising if the referee had awarded a goal. Again the daring Shaw dashed at the feet of Shepherd, when, had he done anything else, the Rangers would have lost their first goal at home.

Some said the game was like a cup-tie, but it was better than that. The dash was there, but it was judiciously mixed with some intelligent combination and hard shooting. The pity of it was that Luton had made the pace too hot for themselves. Once the teams had crossed over, one could see which side would win.

The Rangers were without Fidler and Butterworth, but Whyman has developed into a solid half, while Ovens is a speedy back. It was just as well that he was so in this game, for Luton have a fast and clever wing in Walker and Brown. Stansfield and Moody, too, were far too good for the home defence, except Shaw, while Bob Hawkes and Bushell at half-back spoilt the Rangers' attack. The Rangers are not merely good in parts, they are splendid as a team, and therein lies the secret of their success. When the defence has work to do it can be relied upon to do it. The halves were a bit worried at first by the bewildering form of the Luton forwards, but this only made them all the more determined, and once they had taken the measure of the opposition they played a great game.

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The visitors opened with a couple of remarkable rushes, in which Moody and Stansfield were the chief agents. In each case Shaw had to save a hot shot, and on the second occasion he was slightly hurt, but speedily recovered. This sort of treatment did not suit the Rangers at all, and, pulling themselves together, they made a series of assaults on Naisby, who, however, cleared his line nicely. The game was fast and clever on both sides, but when McKie was almost through he was tripped just outside the penalty area, and Mitchell's kick went behind. The Luton team were very vigorous in defence, Potts playing a heavy game, but their forwards were extremely nippy, and Walker caused Shaw more than one anxious moment.

The Rangers' defence was not so sound as usual, and Ovens, who filled Fidler's place, was at times quite at fault in dealing with the visiting right wing. Fred Hawkes put in a rattling shot, which Shaw dealt with at the expense of a corner, and generally the Rangers had a bit the worst of the game. Their best chance came when Thornton put the ball over to Smith, but the amateur did not quite get his foot to the ball, and Naisby cleared. For Luton, Bushell was playing a masterful game, and it was due to his efforts that McKie was rendered comparatively harmless. Towards the end of the first half, the Rangers improved somewhat, but although they often got in front of Naisby, they could not get the ball past him, and at half-time there was a blank score sheet.

In the second half the Rangers opened in much better style. Twice in the first three minutes Naisby had to save hot shots from the left wing before Mitchell, with a nice forward pass, gave Revill the opportunity he wanted, and a score to the Rangers was the result. Keeping up the pressure, the home team swarmed round Naisby, and Revill netted again, but the point was very properly disallowed, as Smith, from whom he received the ball, was offside when he made the pass.

At this stage Wake came in for a lot of praise for the way in which he held up the Luton right wing, but the fog which had been threatening all the afternoon began to settle down on the ground, and from the stand it was very difficult to follow the flight of the ball. From a corner, however, McKie scored a second goal for the Rangers. Nothing seemed to go right for Luton, a hot shot from Shepherd only being partially saved, but before the visiting centre could get in a second shot, Macdonald booted away, and time came with the score:—

QUEEN'S PARK 2, LUTON 0.
