

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON'S DEPLETED FORCES

BEATEN AT WEST HAM.

It is not often that a team experiences such bad luck in the matter of injuries that only six players can appear in their right places, but that was how it stood with Luton at West Ham on Saturday. With this in mind, it is little wonder that West Ham were able to win by 3-0, the surprising part about it being that the score was not greater. Naisby was kept very busy right through the game, and although he made two slips he recovered in time on both occasions to prevent a score.

When the teams lined up at the interval darkness had fallen on the ground, and it seemed almost impossible for the game to be finished. A quarter of an hour from time the referee stopped the game and consulted both linesmen, while the crowd began to howl about the injustice of the thing. The verdict of the officials must have been that they all could see, and the game went on in the darkness. When Shea scored the third goal for West Ham two or three minutes from time two great white lights in front of a big business establishment that overlooks the ground were shining like beacons at sea. In these dull days there must certainly be an earlier start. It would have been hard luck for the home team if the points had not gone to West Ham, for they were a better team than Luton, in spite of the fact that George Webb, the local centre-forward, was hurt quite early in the game.

Luton's team was almost unrecognisable. First, Potts was still unable to play, so Ashton, who, it is interesting to note, has previously had a trial with West Ham, again figured at left back. The halves were as usual, but the forwards were hopelessly mixed up. Brown was the only one in his right place, and he was partnered by Shepherd. Moody operated at centre, in spite of a bandaged hand, while on the left wing were seen Lashbrooke and Johnson. To do them justice, it is only fair to say that these players rose to the occasion nobly and put forth their very best, but unused to each other's play and in some cases in their wrong places, it was hardly surprising that they were well held by the West Ham defence. Bob Hawkes was in his best form, and twice he tried to score with good shots.

Right from the start Luton at once made ground, and Brown put across a promising centre, which Rothwell snapped up, setting the home team on the attack. Ashton robbed Webb in the nick of time, but West Ham kept up the attack, and Harrison shot well for Naisby to save. After Webb had tested the Luton goalkeeper play was transferred, and, in his anxiety to clear, Glover made a shot for his own goal, and the ball passed just over the bar. Hawkes tried a long shot, sending just a trifle too high. Play was stopped for an injury to Webb, who had to leave, though he returned afterwards and played at inside-right. West Ham gave the Luton defenders plenty of work to do, and R. Hawkes showed up prominently.

Randall put in a hot drive which deserved to score, and Shea made an individual effort, but Naisby ran out and prevented him shooting. Again Luton worked into goal, and things were looking serious when a misunderstanding between the forwards enabled Glover to effect a clearance. After Shea had put in a hot shot Naisby fell to the ground with the ball, and after a scrimmage he managed to toss the ball clear. Webb now returned to the centre position, and marked the change by sending in a grand shot which was too good for Naisby. Close on half-time Lashbrooke missed a good chance by sending very wide. Half-time came with the score, West Ham 1, Luton 0.

Resuming, West Ham went off with considerable dash, and Naisby twice saved. Shea had hard lines with a shot which hit the post. The West Ham attack ended when Whiteman, shooting at long range, sent high over the bar. Luton took a turn, but could effect little. Woodards once more put his forwards in possession, but Naisby was in fine form, and but for this West Ham would have been several goals up. When Harrison at length put in a shot that seemed certain to be going through, the ball rebounded off one of the backs. West Ham were having all the play, though they could not add to their lead. When Wightman missed his kick 15 yards out it seemed that Harrison had a grand chance, but he missed. Shortly after this Harrison made up for his mistake when he took advantage of a pass from Morrison and turned the ball into the net. Luton now made a despairing effort. For a time West Ham were on the defensive, but towards the close Shea scored another goal. Result, West Ham 3, Luton 0.