

WELCOME WIN OVER WEST HAM.

A SECOND HALF METAMORPHOSIS.

Probably the propounder of the old saying concerning the cup and the lip never played football, but his aphorism does not apply with more disconcerting truth to anything than to this game, in which the fickle element of chance always falls so unexpectedly. On Saturday, for instance, West Ham visited Luton, and in the first half absolutely played the home team to a frazzle. With a lead of one goal it seemed that they must win, so immeasurably superior was their form, but in the second half Luton made a wonderful recovery and secured the points.

The difference between Luton's play in the first half and that of the second was one of the main features of the game. In the concluding moiety the forwards adopted that effective style of swing-the ball about from wing to wing, and the success of these tactics should teach them to adopt them in the future. It is only through the absurd idea of close play, and attempting to beat opponents two or three times, when once is sufficient, that has placed Luton in their present position. Only the long passing open game can keep Luton even now from the Second Division.

It was fortunate for Luton that their new centre-forward, George Walden, from Hull City, was signed on in time for him to take part in the match, for Luton had no fewer than six players on the injured list. Walden showed a lack of training, being stiff in his movements and slow at shooting. He showed a brainy knowledge of the game, however, and should prove to be a valuable acquisition. Stephenson was played at outside left, although he was hardly fit, but he played an excellent game, and succeeded in getting across several centres that gave the inside men the easiest of chances. Moody came out of his shell and scored two goals, while Streeton and Brown, especially the latter, did some good things on the right. In the defence, Wightman stood out alone, playing a hard, solid game. Potts was rather below his ordinary standard, this being due to the fact that Bob Hawkes, in front of him, was unwell and could not do himself justice.

West Ham were a much better team in the first half than they were afterwards. The forwards did a lot of good things. Harrison, in the centre, was always looking for scoring chances. Shea played a brainy game, and the visitors' goal was chiefly due to his good work. Dawson, West Ham's recent capture from Croydon Common, can look upon his debut with satisfaction, for he did many things which were good, and has a capital idea of centreing. The half-backs, without being brilliant, were most useful, and the backs very sound, especially Fairman. Hughes made a few very fine saves.

The game commenced rather tamely, but it was not long before the visitors' left wing showed the Luton backs that they would have to keep alert. Neither team, however, settled down at first, though it was fortunate for Luton that Potts was able to dispose of a sterling centre by Dawson. Strange to say, Luton's first real attack also came from the left wing, Stephenson securing a pass from Walden, and after a brilliant run sending in a centre which passed right across the goal mouth, fairly asking to be touched in. For some time after this, Luton were mainly the aggressors, but the visitors' defence proved as strong as Luton's, and a score was prevented with ease. Then the London forwards had a turn. Their combination was brainy and clever, and eventually Harrison beat Naisby with a fast rising shot from about eighteen yards' range. Many people thought that Naisby should have saved the shot, but in justice to the goalkeeper it should be stated that the ball had a considerable amount of force and swerve behind it.

It was recognised by the five thousand or so spectators that another loss at home would probably mean relegation, and therefore this early goal by Harrison was received with chilling silence. The game afterwards became fast and interesting, and some clever work between Moody and Stephenson drew Hughes from his charge, and the West Ham custodian only just succeeded in clearing. West Ham were playing well now, but their efforts were continually spoiled by offside, especially on the left wing. When Luton got away they attacked with determination, and Streeton succeeded in beating Hughes, but he was ruled offside. Towards the close of the half Luton attacked strongly, and Streeton missed an open goal, shooting right over. At the interval West Ham led by the only goal scored.

Luton resumed strongly, and Brown got in a good shot, which Hughes only just saved. The Hammers then attacked, and a shot from Dawson travelled a few inches over the bar. Luton then played up with increased vigour, and a long attack on the West Ham goal resulted in Moody heading through from a grand centre from Brown. This put new life into the home team, and for a few minutes there was no holding them. Another goal seemed certain to come at any moment, and at last Moody received a clever pass from Walden, and dashing right between the backs he placed Luton ahead with a splendid shot. This sudden change highly delighted the spectators, and so encouraged the players that for a time the West Ham goal underwent a series of narrow escapes, one of the best attempts being made by Bushell, who just missed the farther post with a fine drive. Luton then slackened, and the Hammers had a spell of attacking, Naisby making two clever saves by running out to clear from Ashton and Dawson respectively. At last Luton got away, and Stephenson was fouled outside the penalty area just as he was about to shoot from a promising position. Bob Hawkes took the kick and Hughes only just tipped over for a fruitless corner. Nothing further of note happened, and time came with the score:—

LUTON 2, WEST HAM 1.