

THE ODD GOAL AGAIN.

LUTON'S NARROW DEFEAT AT SOUTHAMPTON.

Playing with the desperation of despair, Southampton, with a reorganised team, defeated Luton at the Dell on Saturday by 3-2, after a stern struggle which must have reminded the home crowd of old days. The home club made the daring experiment of including the entire forward line of their reserve eleven, while Robertson was absent through indisposition. Luton, however, were without their regular centre-half, Bushell, whose place was taken by the amateur, R. Clarke. This was Southampton's first victory at home since Boxing Day, and considerably improves their prospects of escaping relegation.

The Hampshire team had an exceedingly anxious time before they left the field with two points in their keeping, and one cannot help thinking that had the visiting forwards exhibited a little steadiness in front of goal, victory would have gone to Luton. If the standard of football was not particularly high, it was certainly most interesting, and the excitement that prevailed at the close of the game was intense. The home team were largely indebted to Lea for their success. The old International did two men's work in defence. From a local standpoint, the outstanding feature of the match was the inclusion of the whole of the reserve team's forwards. It was a bold policy on the part of the directoriate, and even if there were flaws in the attack, the experiment was justified by the result. For Luton, Bob Hawkes nearly saved the game by his astute play, and Naisby was very safe, but Wightman spoiled his display by his tactics, though his kicking was very fine. Moody and Brown were the best of the forwards.

The game opened strongly in favour of the locals, Kimpton and Small, on the right wing, showing an abundance of dash. Twice from centres by wing men the ball was headed just wide of the Luton net, in which Naisby did capital work. As time wore on, the visitors improved; Brown, their outside-right, showed a great turn of speed and accuracy. Mainly through his efforts the visitors took up a prolonged attack, but it bore no fruit, and after 20 minutes' play Prince gave the home side the lead, after a smart run on the part of Kimpton, who was easily the best of the home forwards. Luton equalised five minutes later, Stephenson doing the trick, and they afterwards pressed so heavily that only brilliant defence by Knight in the home goal kept them from increasing their score.

There was a remarkable opening to the second half. Stephenson, Luton's left winger, passed over to the opposite wing, where Brown stood apparently offside. The home players appealed, during which time Brown tipped the ball in to Walden, who turned it into the net. Luton were much the better side for some time, and were only kept out by the brilliant defence on the part of Lea and Ireland, the latter of whom fully compensated for the absence of Robertson. With 20 minutes to go Kimpton led an attack on Luton's citadel, and Prince headed through amid great excitement. At this juncture both Moody and Stephenson missed glorious chances for Luton, whereas Blake, at the other end, made no mistake when he obtained an opening, coolly scoring a goal which made the result:—

SOUTHAMPTON 3, LUTON 2.