

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

BAD LUCK EVEN IN THE LAST MATCH.

LUTON IN THE BOTTOM PAIR.

What has the future in store for Luton football? The horizon is indeed dark, for on Saturday Northampton beat the Blues by 1-0, and Southampton defeated Exeter City by 3-0, with the result that Luton are in the bottom pair and have to accompany Leyton into the Second Division. The Second Division, however, is in such an unsettled state that it is doubtful if it will even exist next season, and supposing it does weather the storms, the Luton Directors might well shrink from having to send a team on expensive journeys into Wales, where nearly all the clubs have their headquarters. When the question was put to one of Luton's directors on Saturday, he said with a lugubrious shake of the head, "We shall never run a team in the Second Division." At present no one knows what will have to be done. It may even come to disbandment, but the fact that at the time of writing Stephenson has been "signed on" seems to show that an effort will be made to keep the old Club on its legs.

Saturday's game, with its injuries and unlucky result, was typical of most of Luton's matches this season. Luton have been dogged by misfortune throughout the season, and to lose the services of two players early in a game which was of such vital importance to them, as the match with the "Cobblers" on Saturday, was the culmination of their bitter experiences. Even with nine men they made a brave show, and had their forwards kept their heads at critical points of the second half they might at least have divided the spoils. As it was, they were beaten by a goal, given away by Brown, their full back, miskicking in the goal mouth.

Northampton's forwards could not adapt themselves to the one-back game, and Potts had his task made easy by their repeated running into the trap. It was really laughable at times, and the crowd took it so, but Luton's forwards kept pegging away with the idea of getting in a shot which would mean a goal. Streeton came very near, but E. Brown was the only man to call on Thorpe with any danger. Mardle made several desperate rushes, but he could not get within striking distance. The only incident in the game to raise a thrill was Naisby's smart save from a penalty. He stopped Hampson's cannon-drive, and when that player banged in from the rebound he saved again. He did other things almost as good, and was quite the hero of the match.

Luton have always been popular at Northampton, and the gate of seven thousand was the largest for some time past. Both sides made changes, the absence of Tull letting in H. A. Redhead in the home forward line, while Streeton displaced Walker in the Luton attack. Naisby in goal was in great form, and early saved a penalty taken by Hampson, clearing again as the Northampton man, regaining possession, put in a hard ground shot. Then Luton's troubles began, for Stephenson left the field with a twisted ankle, and took no further part in the game. Thirty-two minutes from the start the "Cobblers" obtained what proved to be the only goal. Walden broke through, and caused Naisby to fist out, but Redhead headed back into the goal-mouth, where A. Brown miskicked into the net. Just after A. Brown strained his leg, and left the field.

With nine men against eleven in the second half, Luton had more of the game. Against the one-back game the Northampton forwards rarely made headway, and the game degenerated into a farce. Both sides had chances, but whilst the Northampton players missed open goals, the four Luton forwards apparently overburdened with their responsibilities, shot wildly when opportunities of equalising presented themselves. The forward play of both sides was very moderate, for Freeman could do nothing right, and R. Hawkes proved quite a match for Walden on the other wing, Lewis being the best of the home forwards. At half Hampson did well, and the backs were sound, leaving little for Thorpe to do. Too much praise cannot be given to Potts, who played the one-back game magnificently, Naisby co-operating with him in a manner which completely nonplussed the Northampton forwards. The ruddy head of R. Hawkes was always seen to advantage, his defence being sound, whilst he often found time to do the work of a fifth forward. Of the forwards little need be said. They tried hard, but the odds were against them, and time still found the score:—

NORTHAMPTON 1, LUTON 0.