

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS

By "Goalie."

A BRILLIANT OPENING.

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS.

Perhaps never before in the history of football has the opening day of the season been so eagerly looked forward to as has been the case this year, owing partly, no doubt, to the fiasco to which cricket has been reduced by the weather. Thanks to the Southern Alliance, Luton were able to open the season with a home match, Southend providing the opposition, and local enthusiasts had an early opportunity of seeing what their favourites were like. The match did not commence until half-past five, and a crowd of between two and three thousand, representing a gate of about £60, assembled, this being fairly satisfactory. The ground was in good order, and the only factor which militated against a fast game was a disconcerting wind blowing diagonally across the ground, making the ball lively and difficult to control.

Luton turned out as follows:—Day; Henderson and Potts; Wilson, Thompson, and Hawkes; Stephenson, Wileman, Smith, Murphy and Worth. After a hot beginning, the home team, who played against the wind in the first half, dropped off, and Southend looked like putting up a strong opposition. An unexpected goal for Luton, however, put a different complexion on the game, and with Southend cracking up, the home team established a winning lead of 3-0 by half-time. Both sets of players showed signs of lack of training in the second half, but the result was never in doubt, and by scoring another goal, Luton secured a handsome victory by four goals to nil. It was a splendid start, and in the face of it, criticism is somewhat disarmed.

There are, however, one or two improvements that are needed before the team can be called strong. Little was seen of the capabilities of Day, the new custodian, who was not extended to any great extent, but what he did was cool and clean. Potts' form is too well known to need comment, and as Henderson played a useful game, the pair should make, with Day, a fine defence. It was especially pleasing to see that they did not fall into the common error of playing square with one another, but one, generally Potts, kept well up the field, so that an attacking movement had both men to cope with. Bob Hawkes was quite his old self, but the other two half-backs have not quite got used to the forwards in front of them. Thompson will do well in Second Division football with his bustling tactics, and Wilson is a promising tackler.

The most satisfactory point about the forward line is the fact that they evidently know how to score goals. The "star" man is Worth, the outside left. He is not only speedy, but, better still, he can drop in perfect centres from almost any position. All the goals on Monday came directly or indirectly through his efforts, and he must be regarded as a great capture. Stephenson, the outside right, played a good game, although he was not quite so prominent as usual. Smith, the centre forward, has one great failing,—he is slow in making up his mind. Swift passes out to the wing are required when the team possesses such speedy outside men, and every moment's hesitation allows an intelligent defence to take stock of things and frustrate an attack. Murphy will do better when he learns that goals count before artistry, and that he is a forward, not a half-back, but Wileman has already settled down as a good partner to Stephenson.

The first goal was scored about a quarter of an hour from the start. Worth robbed the back of the ball, and sent in a perfect centre, from which Smith guided the ball into the net. A few minutes later, Worth received a nice pass from the centre, and again placed the ball at the feet of Smith, who put on the necessary finishing touch. Worth got the third goal himself, taking advantage of a shot from Murphy which went astray, misced the back, and came out to the left. The winger raced on and easily drove it into the net. The second half was comparatively tame, and only one goal was scored. A corner kick taken by Worth result in a bombardment of Southend's goal, and eventually Thompson, the centre-half, drove the ball through a crowd of players into the net, thus making the score:—

LUTON 4, SOUTHEND 0.