

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS

By "Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

CROYDON COMMON CONQUERED.

ABBOTT'S FINE GOALKEEPING.

VISITORS' SPLENDID UP-HILL STRUGGLE

Luton played one of their most important matches of the season on Saturday, when they entertained Croydon Common, who are dangerous rivals for promotion. Under these circumstances a large "gate" was confidently expected, but man proposes and the Clerk of the Weather disposes, and the miserable weather limited the attendance to 4,000. About eight hours' steady rain turned the pitch into a quagmire, from which the ball shot and skidded in disconcerting fashion, but in spite of this, quite a good game was witnessed. The result was a win for Luton by 3-1, a score which rather flatters them.

The outstanding features of the game were a brilliant goal by Worth and some wonderful goalkeeping by Abbott. A custodian had no very enviable work to do on Saturday, for with the forwards obeying the good old maxim of shooting from all angles and all ranges, he had to be constantly on the alert. Two of Abbott's saves were bordering on the miraculous, and it was very hard luck when, with the last kick of the match a Croydon half-back luckily sent the ball into the net with a shot which the goalie could not see owing to the gathering darkness.

One must always be wary of criticising individuals on such a day as this, but it is quite safe to assert that the visitors suited themselves to the conditions much better than Luton did. In the first half they had the wind and rain behind them, and had hard luck in crossing over a goal to the bad. Even after the interval the Luton defence was at times fully extended, and the home team owe their victory to the fact that they possessed the better goalkeeper. Both the Luton backs, Henderson and Potts, played a good game, and only twice did they allow the Croydon forwards to shoot at close range. It was then that Abbott stepped into the breach and saved the situation.

The same half-back line was seen that played in the two previous games. Fred Hawkes was the pick, and few will forget a clever piece of footwork in the second half, when Fred took the ball from a crowd of players and set his own forwards going. Thompson was weak in tackling at times, but he is improving and should soon settle down to the left half position. In the centre Wilson did many good things, and was particularly prominent with long forward passes to the wing forwards. The only change in the front line was the introduction of Wileman at outside right instead of Rogers. The former, although in an unusual position, played a fairly good game and would doubtlessly have done better but for the fact that his partner, Bob Hawkes, was hardly his old self, owing to the sticky ground militating against his clever touches.

In spite of an injury sustained in the first half, Stephenson gave a good display, and showed that he still knows how to accept opportunities by scoring two goals. Worth was again in splendid form, and he established himself as quite the idol of the crowd, while without being brilliant, Streeton proved a good partner for him. The visitors are a team of triers, and may defeat Luton on their own ground. Their forwards are fast and enterprising, and whenever they got within shooting distance of Luton's goal, they were always dangerous.

The first incident of note in the game was a promising "header" by Stephenson from Wileman's centre, and the centre forward followed this up with a good shot which just missed. Some dazzling dribbling by Bob Hawkes brought forth a round of applause, which was renewed when Yenson, the Croydon centre-half, hit the bar with a brilliant rising shot. The ball beat Abbott, and would have beaten anybody, and after hitting the bar bounced on the line for Henderson to clear. Allman had a good chance to score after a good run by Hennell, but Abbott saved his shot with ease.

At this point Luton were outplayed, but a break away after twenty minutes saw them register the first goal. Wileman put in a fine centre, and Bob Hawkes diverted the ball to Worth, who, with a brilliant first-time shot, sent the ball like lightning into the farther top corner of the net. "The goal of a life-time!" was the comment of one of the Croydon directors. This encouraged Luton to further efforts, and Newton was glad to see a rising shot from Stephenson pass over the bar. In the meantime the forward was charged down while making the attempt, and had to retire to have a stitch inserted just over his eye. Abbott had to be on the alert soon afterwards. He fisted out from a corner, but the ball was returned. Henderson headed it away, and Colpus raised the siege by shooting wide. The other goal also had a narrow escape when Wileman failed to gather a centre by Streeton, and after Chester had had a point disallowed for offside, half time came with Luton a goal up.

The second half was not very old when Newton saved a shot from Wileman which looked dangerous, and immediately afterwards Streeton almost scored from a centre by Bob Hawkes. It was really a shot which went astray, and Streeton rushing up, flashed it just the wrong side of the post. Two nasty daisy-cutters were saved by Abbott, who wisely took no risks, but at the other end Newton was not so safe, and when he dropped the ball after it had been shot in by Wileman, Luton confidently claimed a goal. The goalkeeper certainly had to turn round again to pick the ball up, but the referee decided in Croydon's favour. Then came Abbott's brilliant saves. Polson rounded Henderson, and when ten yards from goal, shot for the opposite end to which Abbott stood. The latter, however, went down at full length, and had the satisfaction of seeing the leather trickle slowly past the farther post.

The resultant corner was well placed, and Yenson shot hard for goal, but Abbott sprang at the ball and fisted it out. Croydon were now pressing heavily, but Luton were always breaking away and shooting, and during one of these raids, Wilson beat the goalie with a cross

shot only to see the ball strike the post and rebound to safety. The second goal soon came, however, a nice pass by Fred Hawkes giving Stephenson an easy chance. The cheering had hardly died down when the centre scored again. Newton, owing to the slippery ball, failed to clear after an attempt by Streeton, and Stephenson sent the ball into the net. Harassed by the visiting forwards, the Lutonians confined the rest of their energies to defence. The game was being finished in semi-darkness, and with the last kick of the match, a shot by one of the visiting half-backs was diverted by Polson, and passing through a crowd of players, went into the net. It was not a hard shot, but owing to the gloom Abbott had not the faintest idea where the ball was until it had crossed the line. Result:—

LUTON 3, CROYDON 1.