

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS

By "Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON AT SWANSEA.

DEFEATED IN EXCITING GAME.

PROSPECTS OF PROMOTION SMALL.

Luton's prospects of promotion reached almost vanishing point on Saturday, when they were defeated at Swansea by 2-0. Luton have to win their remaining two matches, and Southend and Swansea to drop four and Croydon two points to give Luton a chance. As this series of contingencies is an extremely improbable one, except in the case of Southend, Luton football enthusiasts for the most part have resigned themselves to the inevitable. Earlier in the season, Swansea defeated Luton on the latter's ground by 4-0, so the return game was not looked forward to with much confidence. As a matter of fact, however, Luton put up a much better show on the Welsh ground than they did at home, and although Swansea deserved to win, their superiority did not entitle them to a two goal victory. During the first half Luton were always on top, but the second found the home players working together splendidly, and it was then that disaster came.

Even play marked the opening of the game, and both Bob Hawkes, who was the mainstay of the Luton team, and Worth, made good attempts to score, while Potts saved the Luton goal by charging down a shot from Anderson. A moment later Ball had a bare chance to score, but with an open goal in front of him he shot weakly and wide. The Strawplaiters played well against the wind, and their breakaways were always full of danger. Cleverly was safe, except on one occasion, when, with Fisher out of his goal, Wileman struck the post, and Bob Hawkes kicked out from the return with Fisher still away from his charge. Fisher just afterwards had a nasty shot from Hawkes, but fielded well.

Swansea were having an anxious time just now. Stephenson sent in a shot, which to save Fisher went at full length, and before he could clear he was surrounded by the Luton forwards, but Nicholas came to the rescue. Luton lost considerable ground by Smith fouling Nicholas, and play was taken to the other end, Hamilton giving the visitors relief by shooting wide. A lovely centre by Messer was nearly a first-timer, but Bateman fisted away. There was a crowd of Swansea forwards on the goalie, who was given relief by a Swansea forward being given offside. The rain now fell pitilessly, and neither set of forwards could make much headway against the backs, both pairs playing a great game and rarely being beaten. Stephenson once got round Nicholas, and, centring, gave to Smith, who shot into Fisher's hands. The goalie was cheered for his clever clearance. Swansea pressed to the interval, but could not score, Hamilton sending wide from a free kick. At the interval there was no score.

Having the wind against them appeared to weary the Swans but little after the interval for they kept up the attack, and Anderson had a splendid chance, but he used miserable judgment, when he had an open goal. Messer put the crowd in a good humour by shooting after a sparkling run. Bateman got his hands to the ball, and managed to work it round the corner—a wonderful save from a wonderful shot. The crowd were at fever heat with excitement, play being brilliant on both sides, and both goalies used splendid judgment in dealing with awkward shots sent from peculiar positions. Bob Hawkes worked well to mark Messer, but the latter forced a corner, and from this the ball went into the net. Ball being the actual scorer. Luton played like a team possessed after this reverse, and Fisher was twice tested with shots from Wileman and Smith, both of which might easily have beaten a better man than the local lad. Aided with the wind, Luton pressed with determination, but Daffy and Cleverly used their heads with judgment, and kept the Strawplaiters at bay. Hamilton accidentally brought Bob Hawkes over, but the free-kick went behind, although it only missed the inner corner of the net by inches.

The Swans' attack was nonplussed several times by Potts showing a tendency to lie up with his half-backs, and, as a consequence, they often found themselves offside. Anderson was in the picture with a small break through, but his shot struck the side of the rigging. Ball was a thorn in the Luton defence, but he was a little too erratic to turn his bursts through to any advantage. He was badly brought over on one occasion, and from the free kick Bateman was cheered for a clever clearance by punching away. Nicholas has a kick charged down, and Cleverly, going to the rescue, conceded a corner, but the ball struck the rigging. Smith gave Fisher another teaser, but the local lad was there every time. Luton now played the one-back game pure and simple, and the crowd did not like it, neither did the Swans, who failed to tumble to it. Ball managed to get through once, but failed to steady himself, and the ball sailed over the bar, whilst Fyfe just placed the ball over. Swansea were not to be denied, and Anderson, beating the backs, sailed coolly through, and put Swansea two up. In the closing stages Luton tried hard to reduce the lead, but Cleverly was too good. Result:—

SWANSEA 2, LUTON 0.