

LUTON v. CROYDON.

Played on the Luton Ground on Saturday.
Result:—

Luton Town	2 goals.
Croydon Common	1 goal.

Teams:—

Luton: Mitchell; Elvey and Robinson; Fred Hawkes, Frith and Bob Hawkes; Stevens, Wilman, Simms, Brewis and Hoar.

Croydon: Williamson; Little and Hutchins; Yenson, Bushell and Nash; Kingsby, Alhnan, Page, Chester and Barnfather.

Referee: Mr. A. Shallcross (Leek).

Gate receipts, £270. Attendance about 10,000.

It was an excellent thing that the arrangement of the fixtures should have led to the two partners for promotion coming together in their final match of the season. Of course, there was very little chance of Luton getting the championship, for although they unexpectedly beat Swansea by 4-0, it was hardly to be expected that they could do that against Croydon. Still, there was the possibility, and that, together with the keen rivalry between the two clubs, the great enthusiasm amongst the followers of the Luton club, and the splendid weather, all helped to draw another very large attendance, of which several hundreds was composed of Croydon followers. Luton did not win the championship, but they tied on points with Croydon, and the Town players deserve hearty congratulation on the position in which they have placed the club.

The game was not a particularly good exhibition of football. It was very much like a cup-tie at times. Luton were undoubtedly the better team on the whole and should have had a bigger score, but Simms, unfortunately, did

not wind to the season with the good form he has shown at other times. He missed a great chance of giving Luton the lead after Croydon had equalised. Stevens made a brilliant run and passed in, but Simms touched the ball too far ahead and the goalkeeper got it before he did. Just after that he also shot over when well placed, but Simms has done a good deal towards gaining promotion, as these little slips are pardonable. The ball was very tricky and many times other players were beaten by it.

Luton were much the better team in the first half, and Hutchins and Little were placed under such pressure that they did not play the best sort of game. Quite early Hutchins brought over Stevens in a glaring fashion when Stevens was going at a great pace towards goal, and the free kick a little way out from the penalty area was not of much use to Luton. But it was Little who came in for the condemnation of the crowd because of his treatment of Hoar. Little was too fond of using his hands or arms to push Hoar, whom he found much too elusive. Two fouls were given against Little within a few minutes of each other, the second being for a very heavy charge. But in spite of this, Little could not keep Hoar in subjection, and some way on in the first half Hoar lifted the ball right across to Stevens, who passed in to Wileman. The inside right touched it beyond the back and then drove in a splendid left foot shot which crossed about three parts of the goal before going in. It was low and swift and it completely beat Williamson.

Luton had a very narrow escape soon after when Croydon attacked on the left. Page was only a yard or so out from the goal when the ball came in and he seemed certain to score, but he sent it against the post and one of the Luton men headed away only just in time. Luton retained their lead up to the interval, but lost it very quickly after, for Chester gave Page the ball, when the latter was well offside. Frith made a dash to prevent the Croydon man shooting, but Page was too well placed and scored in spite of a good attempt by Mitchell to save. With the score even the excitement was keener than ever, and for a time there was quite an anxious feeling for Luton, because Croydon seemed to get stronger. It was a rushing game: first one side, then the other, would break away, but Luton gradually regained the upper hand, and it was then that Stevens' determined rush gave Simms such a chance. When Hoar passed to Brewis, who gave the ball nicely to Wileman, and the latter twisted the ball in an unexpected direction with his head, Croydon were lucky to escape, for the ball went very close to the post.

The second goal was a marvellous piece of work by Wileman. The game was nearing the end—about 15 minutes to go—when Brewis made one of those delightful passes of his which are the chief characteristic of his play. He sent the ball in the direction of Wileman, but an opponent was trying to head Wileman off from his intended route and it seemed that the inside-right would be manœuvred quite out of a chance of shooting, but with that twist which has brought him many a goal, he got in a shot from a most awkward angle and scored the winning goal. The home supporters went wild with enthusiasm, and a whole flock of straw hats flew up from their perches and fluttered in a thick mass above the bank behind that particular goal. The only outstanding incidents in the remainder of the game were a fine save by Mitchell of a shot from Page, and Chester's disagreement with one of the lineemen.

The possibility of some kind of celebration of the end of such a successful season by impromptu speeches or the like kept some people waiting about on the ground, but there was nothing beyond pats on the back for the Luton players as they passed from the field to the dressing room. The players will no doubt receive something more solid than congratulatory speeches. There was plenty of talk of a kind. Some of the Robins' supporters, who had come decorated with red and white colours, entered into heated arguments with Luton enthusiasts as to the powers of their respective teams. No doubt Luton and Croydon will be very keen rivals in the First Division next season. The match on Saturday saw neither of them at their best. There was not much to enthuse over in the Croydon team. Kingsby was the most interesting forward, with Page in evidence every now and then with dash. Their backs are a sturdy pair, but Little was not so sporting as one likes to see. Williamson had more work than Mitchell and he did well, but he had to be thankful that Simms was not up to his usual standard. Williamson, however, made one very fine save. That was from Wileman, who in the early part of the match put in one of his favourite cross shots—the sort with which he scored his two goals. Williamson made a great effort and tipped the ball over the bar.

Wileman, in fact, was in one of his best shooting moods, and had the rest of the line been so effective Luton might now be at the top. But that is not worth bothering about. One would be a caviller to harp upon such a topic. With Robinson and Durrant both still incapacitated by their injuries, Brewis and Stevens came in. Brewis early in the match was several times beaten by the lively ball, and he never really showed his best form except in that splendid pass which helped Wileman to score the winning goal. Stevens, however, had quite a successful afternoon. His dash was very useful against such a defence and he showed no fear, in spite of being bowled over in a rough fashion early in the game. Hoar showed pluck in refusing to be bottled up by Little and his centres were finely executed. As to the halves, backs and goalkeeper, the concise way to put it is that they all played well in a match which was not one of the kind which gives many chances to the majority of players to play their best football.

FOOTBALL NOTES.

Local Players' Assistance in Promotion Winning.

THE SIGNING-ON BUSINESS.

[BY CRUSADER.]

The end of the season has come, so far as Luton is concerned. The vital matter of promotion was settled a week ago, but still the players could not help being enthusiastic over the match last Saturday, seeing that it was the meeting of the two top teams. Luton had gone out to get the same amount of points as Croydon. It is no more better than dragging in the First Division door several points behind the leaders. Luton, in fact, took on Croydon's loss in getting through, and this made Croydon rather short-tempered. The match on Saturday was, in consequence, rather exciting in some parts. However, that is all over now. While congratulating all the Luton players on the success which they have brought to the Club, it is well to note the part that the "locals" have taken in bringing about that success.

Five of the team that has been largely instrumental in winning promotion are from this district, namely, Bob Hawkes, Fred Hawkes, Durrant, Eiver, and Hoar. This should emphasise the importance of keeping a watchful eye on the local teams. Useful players are as likely to be produced amongst them as anywhere else, and when a local man turns out a success that is bound to have its influence on the gate receipts. Abbott also is a local, and whenever he has been called upon to play he, too, has proved himself a good man. The roping-in of players from amateur teams, while doing good to the professional club, apparently does no harm to the amateur teams, judging by the case of Luton Clarence, for although they lost the services of Eiver and Hoar, the Clarence have had another remarkably good season. Other players have risen up to take the place of those who joined the Town team, and the Clarence have made a splendid show in the Athenian League—or "Athenation" League, as I heard it called. It sounded almost ecclesiastical.

What the football enthusiast now wants is signing-on news, but it is likely to be slow in coming. It is just now that the influence of money in football becomes most obvious. The professional rightly wants to get as much as he can for his services, and clubs—the majority of whom are never "flush"—have to be careful how they lay out their supply. Luton have had a good season, but their resources are still limited, and with a more expensive time coming on because of having to provide a First Division team and reserves, they have to be careful. I don't suppose there is any question of signing on every one of the present players, but it may be presumed that what may be called the promotion team—the men who have done most to help the Town back to the First Division—have been asked on what terms they would stay. It is all a question of terms, and up to the present no agreement has been come to. Some of the players are reported to be asking for a considerably higher wage than they are likely to get. However, it is not improbable that agreements may be arrived at soon in some instances, because some of the players want to return to their homes at the end of this week.

In any case, there must be some new men in the Luton side next season if the Town are to do anything in the First Division, and the officials may be relied upon to do what they think best for the Club. By the way, I think some credit should be given to them for their work this season. When there is a lack of success there are a good many harsh things said about Directors and officials. Now that they have done so well their work should be appreciated. While saying this, I think that a special word should be given to Mr. "Charlie" Green, the secretary, that living cyclopædia of football history and facts about players and their form. He had a lot to do with building up the team—a very difficult task when financial resources are slender and when so much depends upon the choice of men made.

I hear that Dodd's injury turned out more serious than was anticipated. He has had to remain in bed some days to rest his damaged knee. Representatives of the Club have been over to Harpenden to make personal inquiries about his progress and to see him. In the same match that Dodd twisted his knee, the Cardiff goalkeeper, Kneeshaw, got his collarbone broken, but this discovery was not made until he had reached South Wales. He said nothing about it when he was about with some of the Club officials in Luton after the match.

The Mayor of Croydon is to preside at a complimentary dinner to be given to the Croydon Common players on May 8th, to celebrate the Club's promotion. Practically all the leading Croydon players have signed on for next season. During the match at Luton last Saturday, Wilkie was called from his seat on the field, just inside the rails, and was afterwards to be seen in conversation with a gentleman at the rear of the stand. The latter was making careful notes, and those who saw the incident naturally thought of signing-on news. Swansea are reported to have re-signed their first team, and also to have resolved to dispense with the position of manager—a decision which will involve dispensing with the services of Mr. Walter Whittaker, who has been with the Club since its inception, two seasons ago. He formerly played in goal for Brentford, Clapton Orient, and Exeter.

Luton followers are not unnaturally curious about the allocation of the bonuses to players, but it is very unlikely that the details of the amounts given to the various players will be made public, except in so far as the total is concerned. The fact that Luton's season was at an end was emphasised by a peep into the Town ground on Tuesday. Instead of players, one saw sand heaps lined up. This material helps greatly in getting a good surface when the ground is rolled during the season. "Jimmy" Bygrave was busy in the burning sun judiciously distributing the tons of sand, and Mr. Secretary Green had been transformed into a farmer. "What we could do with now," he said, "is a little rain!"