

# FOOTBALL.

## BEATEN AT HOME

### Luton Give up Points to Bottom Team.

Luton Town sustained their first home defeat of the season in the Southern League on Wednesday, in spite of their opponents being Queen's Park Rangers, the team at the bottom of the table, with three successive defeats to their account. The Blues gave even a poorer display than they did the previous week against Southampton, and this time they did not have the luck to escape their deserts. The Rangers were always masters of the situation, and were full value for a 4-2 victory, and the only thing that can be said in extenuation of Luton's inglorious show was that the Rangers were able to field their full strength, whereas the Blues were minus all their first choice half-backs. All three of the halves operating at West Ham sustained injuries in that game, and with Frith also not available, Dunn, the reserve right back, had to be relied upon at right half, with Wilson in the centre, and Needham on the left.

It was a matter of general comment that the game was nothing like as good as the majority of those witnessed in the Second Division last season, and they did not exaggerate, for although the Rangers' football was far from reaching the average Southern League standard, it was infinitely better than that of the homesters, and gave them pretty well all the exchanges. The first half was especially scrappy and devoid of attraction. Luton did not enjoy ten minutes attacking during the whole three quarters of an hour, and the only promising feature of the little forward work seen from them was the opportunism of Simms. Twice he took first time lunges at centres nicely placed by Roberts, and on the first occasion he hit the post with an effort exactly similar to that which came off against Southampton, but the second time he clean missed an open goal, and one of the backs had the narrowest escape from scoring for Luton.

The score sheet was clear until three minutes before the interval, but it was entirely due to Elvey and Mitchell that this was the case. Mitchell came to the rescue of his side in magnificent style on quite a number of occasions, but at last Miller in the centre proved too good for Elvey, and Donald, the outside left secured from Watford, was allowed to go on with only Mitchell between himself and the goal, and the custodian failed to stop a smart cross drive. The goal never should have counted, but it made all the difference to the Rangers. Their forward work became altogether more finished and resourceful, and their shooting was so much on the spot that both Gregory, inside left, and Birch, inside right, hit the upright before Birch increased their lead in the first five minutes of the second half. It was a really delightful goal. Birch neatly trapped a bouncing ball, and as Needham floored him he swung round and landed right in the far corner.

With anything like form, Luton could easily have won the game even now, because McLeod, from Newport County, did not shape at all convincingly in goal when he was troubled. It was a sheer case of luck when he caught in his body a great shot from Wileman close against the post, and a minute later he could do no better than smack into the goal a hot left footer from Hoar. The crowd became aroused for the first time during the game, but it was quite a flash in the pan. Within three minutes Robinson got in the way instead of taking the man and leaving the ball to Mitchell, and the goalkeeper was unable to make even an attempt to prevent Miller heading through from Donald's centre. Donald, slipping the ball by Elvey, was also the means of the Rangers scoring a fourth time, his centre leaving Gregory with only Mitchell to beat. With ten minutes to go the referee did his best to give Luton a sporting chance by awarding them a penalty for hands quite two yards outside the area. Wilson took the chance, and the Rangers were rightly indignant about the decision, which the referee adhered to after consulting the linesmen. Three minutes later, however, Simms missed a glorious chance of making the game interesting, getting clean through from a free kick, and then shooting yards wide with the left, and this was Luton's last chance.

Once more the Blues were only saved from a rout by Mitchell and Elvey. Both were overwhelmed with work, and both made only one mistake, from which they finely recovered, and their grand work all through only threw up in stronger relief the feebleness of the rest of the side. Robinson was terribly erratic, and the weakness of the half-back line was most pronounced. Wilson seemed quite lost in the centre, and not one of the trio seemed to have the slightest idea of passing either low or accurately. As the Rangers were the bigger and heavier side, the ballooning policy of the home halves gave the home forwards absolutely no opportunities, and although Roberts and Hoar did some useful things, it was rare they ever got the ball. The inside forwards were practically never in the picture because the Rangers' halves were just as valuable a line as the home halves were feeble, and thanks to the work of this line, the visiting forwards showed remarkably good form for a line which had only scored once in three games.

Territorials again contributed largely to the crowd, the gate being about £60.