

FOOTBALL.

Norwich Take Away a Point.

[By CRUSADER].

Southern League match, played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton Town 1 goal.
Norwich City 1 goal.

Teams:—

Luton—Mitchell; Elvey and Robinson; Fred Hawkes, Johnson, and Wilson; Roberts, Heath, Simms, Chipperfield, and Hear.

Norwich City—Denoon; Houghton and Mackenzie; Collins, Martin, and Bell; Potter, Woods, Turner, Ritchie, and Wilson.

Gate receipts, £131. Attendance, about 6,000, including 2,000 Territorials.

The local supporter will very naturally wish that Luton had won both points instead of shared them, but Norwich deserved one, even though their goal was scored through Turner getting away from an offside position, and though Luton were twice within measurable distance of getting the winning goal—once when Simms hit the bottom of the post and later when he had the goal almost completely at his mercy but shot wide. On Saturday's form, Norwich are one of the strongest teams in the League, and should do well. Most of their players seem seasoned players; none, for instance, had the youthful appearance of our left wing. Arthur Collins, their captain, has had eight years' experience with Fulham. Denoon, their goalkeeper, was previously with Chelsea.

The Luton side was a trifle experimental. Changes were made in the inside forward positions, and injuries brought about a different half-back line. Frith still walks stiffly as the result of the abrasion on his left knee, and Bob Hawkes has not wholly got over his strain. Fortunately, Fred Hawkes and Johnson had recovered, so these two and Wilson were brought together to compose the middle line. When Fred won the toss it seemed that he had done a very good thing, because of putting "the Canaries" to face a very strong wind, but, as not infrequently happens, the fact of having a hard wind blowing from behind, did not seem a great advantage. The ball often travelled so quickly away from the Luton players when they attempted to give it just a touch in front of them, that it was a positive disadvantage.

With the wind against them, Norwich proved much wiser in their tactics than Luton did. Of course, it is very easy to look on and dogmatise. In fact, that's what all the spectators go to do. But it is exasperating to see one side—or several players of one side—constantly ballooning the ball when there is a high wind. Norwich, in the main, were much more successful in keeping it low when passing, and that was why they so frequently made headway. Their half-backs cultivated the low pass to the forwards, which helped the latter to get the ball more under control instead of having, as on many occasions was the case with ours, to leap into the air and get the ball, only to find that opponents had by this time arrived to impede progress.

Norwich, however, must have considered themselves in luck to get that goal. There were quite fierce arguments at one end of the Press and Directors' box as to whether Turner was offside at the beginning of the movement which ended in his scoring. Personally, I haven't the slightest doubt about it. Turner went on at a good pace, and just managing to scramble round the one back left to challenge him, he turned it by Mitchell, who had run out with the hope of getting the ball when Elvey and Turner met. However, Luton had to make the best of it, and for a time they were kept busy because Norwich were so pleased at scoring that it gave them greater power. The admirable way in which their forwards worked the ball up against the wind seemed to indicate that they were going to achieve lasting ascendancy over Luton. At this time Elvey proved of great worth because of his steady defence, however much the Norwich forwards tried to bustle him. Wilson, the outside left, made several good runs. When he succeeded in eluding Elvey, Fred Hawkes, by anticipating Wilson's next move, more than once checked a dangerous attack.

The tide of the game ebbed and flowed. Norwich did not have all the play, and their defence received something of a shock when Simms drove the ball in very hard and struck the bottom of the post. It hit the upright in such a fashion that the ball flew right across in front of Denoon from left to right. Fortunately for him the course was outward, but there were a couple of minutes of exciting struggle around the front of the goal before the ball went out of play.

Luton kept working up towards the Norwich goal, and the endeavours of Roberts provided several good incidents in his part of the field. He kept Mackenzie busy, but the latter, because of his height, had a natural advantage over Roberts when it came to heading. Roberts, however, never admitted himself beaten at it, and whenever the chance came, tried to get his head to it first. The competition between these two led to a rather startling occurrence once. Both leapt up to head the ball, and their heads came together with a crash. Mackenzie fell like a log, but Roberts sprang up and walked round a few paces. Then, obviously, the pain began to come to him. He put his hand to his forehead, and when he withdrew it, his palm was covered with blood. Mackenzie was helped up, and both had to receive generous allowances of sticking plaster before they were able to resume.

For some time Luton had forced all the play into the Norwich half. Denoon had quite a job to clear the ball once when Simms and Heath met him as he ran out with it. In the next moment a fine left-foot drive by Simms missed by only a few inches, and then Chipperfield tried a long shot, which provided Denoon with a stinging handful. Roberts was able to move about again on the right, though the running apparently jarred his aching head. However, when the ball came out nicely to him not long before the interval he forgot the pain and put in a capital centre. The three inside forwards all converged upon it. One pushed it away from the Norwich back, and then the two stepped aside to let Heath get it. Steadying himself, the ex-Leeds City amateur placed it nicely into goal and drew.

When the players turned out for the second half, the spectators suffered quite a little shock. Out trotted the "Canaries" in their rather weak yellow and blue, and then came another eleven in resplendent red. The crowd could hardly realise for the moment that these could be the men generally regarded as "The Blues." But of course they were, and they looked exceedingly smart. The colour was a nice dark red, with the usual loop from neck to chest in black. After some early attacks, in one of which Heath turned the ball nicely across the goal-mouth, Luton felt the pressure of the wind, and not having such good control of the ball as Norwich, they could make less headway against it. Elvey exercised as much prudence as anyone in keeping the ball low, except in cases when he was very hard pressed. Then he sent the ball out in any fashion so long as the Norwich move was checked.

The home forwards had to do a good deal of running back to fetch the ball. But it must be admitted that in many cases, both amongst the halves and forwards, the passing was badly judged. There seemed too much hurry to get rid of the ball and too little allowance for the wind. Yet there were times when the forwards showed good work. That it did not come to much must perhaps be attributed to the frustrating effect of the wind, which upsets even the best calculations of the wildest player. When a great chance did come, though, it was a pity to see it thrown away, as in the case of Simms' shot which has been referred to. Hear swung the ball across to the right to Heath, who got it past the Norwich back, and gave Simms a glorious opportunity. Simms raced up hard, and—sent the ball wide. Even Simms was annoyed with himself, and no doubt asked himself a question as he put his hand to his head on wheeling round. Heath, who had come up alongside, smiled, and said something—probably some little word of condolence, realising better than the spectators how easy it is to miss the "certain" goal.

In the last few minutes, when Johnson mis-kicked, and the ball flew across to Potter, who drove it in hard, Mitchell made a fine save regardless of Turner charging right into him. Simms created a little crisis for Norwich, but Mackenzie partially cleared. There was a tussle for a minute or so before they quite got rid of the danger. Play was then taken to the Luton end, but the closing incident showed Luton pressing, for Robinson, with a mighty kick, sent the ball from near the half-way line swerving into the Norwich goal-mouth. However, Denoon caught it, and Norwich were able to go home with one point.

Norwich have a good centre-half in Martin, who fed his forwards in a style worthy of imitation. The forward line seemed quite a good one. But the day was not one on which one could form very reliable judgments of the form of players. Of the Luton side, Hear seemed quite off, and with the best intentions in the world, failed on several occasions even to get hold of the ball. One big mistake he made was to try dribbling against an old hand like Arthur Collins. There were some good points about Chipperfield's play, but the conditions would not let him or any other player be at his best. Heath, for instance, misjudged the ball on several occasions towards the end, yet there were times, particularly in the first half, when he showed the characteristics of a natural footballer. Johnson was the best of the half-back line, chiefly because of the way he fed the forwards. Elvey was quite the better of the backs. On a day like Saturday however, one would not like to form fixed judgments of any player.