

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

Luton v. Gillingham.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton		3 goals
Gillingham	)	1 goal

The teams were as follow:—

Luton.—Mitchell; Elvey and Dunn; F. Hawkes, Wilson and R. Hawkes; Roberts, Wileman, Simms, Rollinson and Hoar.

Gillingham.—Bailey; Leslie and Mosley; Johnson, Gray and Mahon; Wimsett, Thomas, Weightman, Giligan and Pinkney.

Referee: Mr. C. T. Lutwyche (Birmingham).

At Luton on Saturday Gillingham played well above the form which sent, and has kept, them to the foot of the Southern League, and just before and after the interval, when they were in arrears by the odd goal in three, they gave the impression that they were capable of making Luton divide the spoils. Afterwards, they did not seem to stay the game out half as well as Luton, who finished rather freshly considering the hot pace, and they were fortunate to have only one goal scored against them in the last half hour. However, Luton had themselves to blame, partly for not netting oftener, as they seemed to shut up like a knife when they took their clever midfield work into close range.

Apart from the stiff fight Gillingham offered, which was the most surprising element in the game, the dogged way in which Luton strove to give a decisive turn to things in the greater part of the second half was perhaps the most interesting feature. Times out of number both collective and individual movements appeared to have success written all over them until weak shooting or over-anxiety disposed of the impression, and as time was passing in this way it seemed probable that Luton would have to be content with the narrowest victory in goals, though on the run of the play, and especially in the second half, they were easily good value for both points.

Then, a minute off time, Roberts gave his side a verdict that was more in keeping with the tendency of the play. From thirty yards out he drove the ball nicely under the cross-bar—a fine piece of judgment. Roberts had also scored the first goal, though he would be quick to admit that he could not have had this success but for the co-operation of Wileman. The latter seized the ball when a visiting back stumbled and blocked Roberts' way, and he ran nimbly up and volleyed at the Gillingham goal. The custodian was brought low in dealing with the shot, and Roberts, now well up, banged the rebound into a corner of the net. The inside of the rigging was rattled two minutes later by Simms, who had commanded the ball over a quarter of the field on his own. The goalkeeper saw that his only chance of saving was by leaving his charge; so he stepped out, but at the right moment the Luton pivot tipped the leather safely beyond his opponent's reach. It was a brainy goal.

It seemed to us that, generally, Simms showed a fine sense of the circumference of things. He seldom failed to keep his wings busy after he had attracted the defence, and as the halves—F. and R. Hawkes and Wilson—spread themselves out to advantage, the wing forwards had an enjoyably full time. As a whole, the team did well, though it is desirable in future games that they get into their stride a little earlier than they did against Gillingham. The spectators had to shout them a "pick-me-up" before they buckled on their armour, as it were, and although it had tonic effects, it would be better if Luton put their hands to the oars straightway. They had something at stake as well as Gillingham, for the two points enabled them to climb another rung of the ladder.

The presence of soldiers, many of them wounded, was again a feature of the attendance, which numbered 4,500, and produced a £60 gate.

Luton's supporters were naturally interested in Southampton's English Cup adventure at Fulham, and the former's success by three goals to two after the playing of extra time is leading Lutonians to wonder how far their team could have gone in the competition if Southampton had not intervened. However, there is not likely to be much exuberance in that direction if it is remembered that Southampton were rather lucky to beat Fulham. There could be no doubt of the superiority of Fulham so far as football ability was concerned. This was emphasised by the fact that for more than three-fourths of the game they were pressing their opponents severely.