

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

Luton's Record Saturday.

Luton Town set up a record for the season on Saturday, for both teams were successful in bagging two League points on the same day. The first team registered their initial victory of this year, and the first they have gained on a Saturday in a home Southern League game since the first week of the season, while the Reserves followed up their victory of the previous week over Norwich City by scoring their first success away since their profitable campaign of the opening month of the season. Gillingham were the club to provide Luton with this double success, and the Reserves accomplished the more praiseworthy performance of the two, because while Gillingham are firmly established at the bottom of the Southern League table and surrendered points to Luton in the match played in Kent, their Reserves are well up in the South-Eastern League, with 26 points for 25 games, and they captured a point at Luton by a one-goal draw, when the Blues' second string were doing well in September. Luton have now regained the position they dropped in the Southern League through the defeat at Norwich, and possess 20 points for 23 games, with a goal average of 37 against 46. The Reserves now have 14 points for 25 games, with a goal average of 31 against 54, but the only two teams behind them have several games in hand.

FIRST SOUTHERN LEAGUE WIN THIS YEAR.

The Blues were on Saturday playing their first Southern League game at home for nine weeks, and Gillingham's record naturally did not appeal to many as much of an attraction, nearly two thousand of a gathering of about five thousand spectators being wearers of the khaki. Luton had their usual side, except for Frith, who telegraphed that he had another cold on him and was unfit, and the teams lining out under Mr C. L. Lastwyche, of Birmingham, the referee who handled the important game with Swansea last season, were:—

Luton:—Mitchell; Elvey and Dunn; Fred Hawkes, Wilson and Bob Hawkes; Roberts, Wilman, Simms, Rollinson and Hoar.

Gillingham:—Bailey; Mosley and Leslie; Mahon, Gray, and Johnson; Pinkney, Gilligan, Weightman, Thomas, and Wimsell.

It was a curious game all through, and in saying that one has mentioned the chief point of interest, for as an exhibition of football it was not worthy to rank as a Southern League fixture, especially considering the tolerably favourable conditions under which the players operated. The first half was easily the better of the two from every point of view, and this was probably due to the surprising turn events took. Gillingham opened with an earnestness and liveliness no one would have credited from a London-spoonist. The very first time, however, that Luton got anywhere near the visitors' goal they came off trumps, thanks to the resource of the right wing. Simms suddenly opened up the game with a lunge out to the wing, Roberts met it, and as he drew the back pushed the ball inside. Off Wileman sped to close near the line, and then he let fly with one of his rousing drives. It brought Bailey to his knees, and before he could fasten on the ball Roberts had followed up on the inside and smashed the ball high up in the net. It was a rousing piece of work, and made all the difference to the run of the game, for after Hoar and Wileman had finely tested Bailey in quick succession, Simms went through and increased Luton's lead.

Those five minutes had produced such a change that Luton seemed in for a runaway victory, and the visiting defence were so thoroughly disorganised that the Blues ought easily to have made the issue quite safe before half-time. But a break-away on the visitors' right found the Luton defence unprepared, and Pinkney's centre provided his inside men with an easy chance. Mitchell did well to save from Weightman, but that was the most he could do, and before he had a chance to recover Thomas easily netted.

The second half was no more than a scramble, and very tame at that, leaving out of account "breezes" between some of the players. Wileman was robbed of a certain goal in the first five minutes by a push in the back, so palpable that it was most surprising it escaped the observation of the referee, but after this Gillingham made much of the running, and it was not until the end of the game that Luton managed to score again. The goal came in the last minute or so, and was a surprise to everybody—including the scorer. Bob Hawkes placed in well from a free-kick for hands, one of the backs headed away to the wing, and gathering with the left Roberts twirled the ball into the goal from a seemingly impossible angle.

The final score of 3-1 was somewhat flattering to the Blues in the light of the run of the game in the second half. Roberts was the pick of the Luton vanguard, and Gilligan and Weightman did best in the Gillingham attack.