

FOOTBALL NOTES.

The Mailing of Northampton.

At Northampton:—

LUTON TOWN		4 goals.
NORTHAMPTON		1 ..

Teams:—

NORTHAMPTON.

Thorpe.

Clipstone.

Sproston.

Manning.

Grendon.

Tomkins.

Pease, Dickens, Whitworth, Lockett, Freeman

O

Bookman.	Williams.	Simms.	Tomlinson.	Roe.
Parker.		Rutherford.		Urwin.
Dunn.				Elvey.

Summers.

LUTON TOWN.

Referee: Mr. S. H. Harris.

"If there were dreams to sell, what would you buy?" asked Thomas L. Deddoes. It is safe to say that if we football followers of Luton Town had been called upon to answer that question a week or two back we would have asked for a victory away from home, just to prove that the Town's team was something more than a "home winning" side. Had the question been asked a week ago last Saturday night, the answer would have been "To win at Northampton next Saturday." There were two particular reasons why we coveted the points at Northampton. In the first place, the spirit of rivalry between the clubs has always been of the highest order; in the second, the "Cobblers" had been to Southampton and taken the halo from the "Saints" by a victory of six goals to two. It may be that some of us did dream of victory, but I am quite sure that the big score made by the "Cobblers" made us "pooh-pooh" the idea of successful prophecy.

Some, however, have evidently lost no faith in the "Blues," or have found their faith revived. Five points for three matches was their justification, and I guess that when the Town take the field against Crystal Palace on Saturday, some voices will be asking for the record to be made nine out of a possible ten, for on Saturday the "Blues" won on their merits. I know that there are fluked victories, although the fluke is usually a mistake by one of the other side, but there was no fluke or luck about the Town's success on Saturday. It was a sterling win, hall-marked, twenty-two carat, as the Northampton supporters readily admitted.

There has been a disposition to think that Northampton are a poor side. Certainly they were made to look so on Saturday, but I am not going to detract from the merits of the "Blues" performance in that way. The victory was due to the improved display of the Town players. It has been coming along for weeks, and on Saturday it reached its high-water mark. Fore and aft, the team played like a championship side. Defensive work was prompt and clean. The middle line combined aggressive and defensive tactics; the forwards passed and shot better than in any previous game. It was an all-round improvement, most conspicuous in the forward department because most needed there. The only regret was that Summers should have been beaten once. It would have been well to have kept a clean score sheet for a little longer.

When Dickens opened the score for Northampton in the first minute, one wondered for a few minutes if this misfortune would affect the Town's play; but the anxiety was removed by the manner in which the "Blues" settled to work. Thorpe and his backs were in constant employment, and how many times they averted downfall by the merest shave, it would be hard to tell. The passing of the Luton inside trio, and the clever runs and centres of the extreme wingers, the following-up of the halves, and the resolute tackling and kicking of the backs, always presaged goals. When the equaliser came it was as simple as could be imagined. Bookman got round Clipstone, and the centre he put across left Tomlinson with little option than to score. The pressure was resumed on re-starting, and Williams got home with a glorious drive, which went into the net like a flash. It was the sort of goal we have been expecting from him, and which I knew would soon come.

Northampton's raids had been few and far between, being in arrears, they now worked valiantly to equalise, but they were still found wanting at the cross-over. They might have done so as soon as the game re-started, had Pease left the ball alone when Dickens sent in. He assisted it into Summers' hands. Had there been a score, however, it would have been hard on the Town, for Dunn was at this moment on the ground, unaware of what was proceeding. Summers, too, was laid out, and both had to receive attention before resuming. The Town again showed their mettle, and Simms put the issue beyond doubt when he capped a fine individual effort which saw Thorpe beaten by a splendid shot from twenty yards. He then put the acceptable finish to a great effort by Roe, and Luton had now won, bar shouting.

Nearing the close, however, Dunn tripped Whitworth over in the penalty area, and as he had done it in a manner disapproved by the rules, Whitworth got a chance to reduce the lead. His penalty shot would have scored but for the agility of Summers, who, with a cat-like jump, managed to knock the flying ball to the other side of the upright. So did the "Blues" win.

I hope the directors will persevere with this team. The fact that Tomlinson has scored three goals and only played in three matches, entitles him to his place. I could never quite understand why, with his goal-scoring record, he did not seem to do so well with the Town.



P. HILL.

His faults are a tendency to hug the ball, and a lack of speed, and even on Saturday he did not feed Roe enough. But it must not be forgotten that he is primarily a centre-forward, and has been accustomed to the individual effort. If he will distribute the ball and especially remember his right hand partner, he should do well at inside right. After all, goals are the thing, and if he can get them, he is necessary. Simms showed more of his old dash than ever before this season, and his shooting was well on the spot. He might well have had a couple more goals. Williams continued that excellent improvement, and it is good to see his name among the goal scorers. Bookman is gradually finding his best, and will surely prove the value of the investment in him. Roe once before gave evidence of ability to take the extreme wing position, and although his style differs from that of Bookman, it was equally effective when he got the chance. The halves were level in excellence, and the understanding between them and the five in front was never better than on Saturday. At back, Elvey shone as usual, but Dunn was very sure, and Summers was in his customary form.

Of the home side, Thorpe could not be blamed; the backs were not fast enough for the Town forwards, and the halves lacked both the science and the stamina to cope with the "Blues." Forward, Dickens and Freeman were the pick, but the line did not work harmoniously at all.