

On the Town Ground.

Southern League.

SATURDAY, OCT. 16th,

at 3.30

LUTON V. CHATHAM.

FROM THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

NEW CENTRE HALF SIGNED ON BY TOWN CLUB.

The efforts of the Luton Town directors to secure a new centre half have at last been crowned with success. It is conceivable that some of the Club's supporters will be disappointed that the latest acquisition is not a player of ripe experience who has won his spurs, but a youngster who is new to first-class professional football, but the directors are fairly sanguine that in William Walsh they have a half whose performances promise to rapidly bring him to the front. Walsh comes from the same part of Durham as Cockerill, and has been very strongly recommended by his compatriot, and the directors had the opportunity of seeing him out twice before signing him up. At Reading a week ago he was played left half, as arrangements had been fixed up for another centre half to have a trial before Walsh's acceptance came to hand, but at Brighton on Wednesday he played in his own position, and in both games he gave complete satisfaction. He is 22, scales about 11 stone, and in build is almost the very double of Cockerill, and besides being a keen tackler he shows capital anticipation, and is very apt and accurate in his distribution of the ball to the forwards. Walsh has been engaged at Horden Colliery, and has played for his local team in one of the junior leagues of the district. He could have gone to another League club, and it was entirely due to his friend Cockerill being here that he gave Luton the preference of his services.

The other centre half tried at Reading was Walker, a Scottish junior, whom Mr. Ernest Gibbs saw play when on a visit to Scotland some weeks back. Mr. Gibbs was so impressed with his style of football that he was quite prepared to take the risk of signing him there and then, but Walker, who is an engineer, was not prepared to take the leap, and it was at his suggestion that arrangements were made for him to come down on trial. His display fully confirmed the excellent opinions first formed of him, and he was pressed to stay for the match on Wednesday, but he did not feel disposed to take the risk of being thrown out of employment by absenting himself from work. Like a true canny Scot, it appears that he was also weighing things up in his mind, for on Friday an intimation was received from him that Luton would not see him again, as he had decided he was not very much in love with English football. It is a great disappointment that his services have not been secured, for the directors are confident he would have proved a great source of strength.

Davis, the inside left, who came to Luton with Baylis from Alfreton, will not be seen in the Town colours again. Some few weeks back he was rather badly injured in an accident in the mine, but this was merely coincident to and not the cause of the directors' decision to dispense with his services. As a matter of fact, it had been decided to drop him before anything was known of the accident, and the termination of his engagement has been amicably settled. It was felt that his form did not warrant the expense of bringing him up from Derbyshire every week, on the top of his wages.

HIGGINBOTHAM'S SUSPENSION.
Harry Higginbotham, the Town inside left, is under the necessity of taking a month's rest from football as from Thursday last. This is the decision arrived at by the F.A. as a result of his being sent off in the game at Portsmouth on September 8th. The fact that the matter dragged on for such a long period before a decision was reached rather goes to suggest that the F.A. have been at unusual pains to get at the real truth of the affair, and in these days, when the authorities have announced their determination to put down foul play by smart sentences, the award of a month's suspension indicates that the adjudicators did not regard Higginbotham's conduct in a serious light. Nevertheless, the fact that the player has been punished at all is regarded both by his comrades and the Town directors who were present at the match as a miscarriage of justice. It is claimed that the referee's report was far from being an accurate version of what occurred in many of the essential particulars, and there is a general feeling that the player has had to suffer for mistakes made by the ruling official.

ANOTHER DOUBLE EVENT FOR TOWN CENTRE.

Another glorious Saturday afternoon favoured the first visit Grimsby Town have paid to Luton since the days of twenty years. And more back, when for three seasons the Scarwhatters and the Fishermen were rivals in the Second Division of the League, and nearly ten thousand spectators voted it delightful in every sense of the word. The players must have found it distressingly hot, but they gave a rattling exhibition. All through, the game was vigorous and bustling, yet remarkably clean, it was most admirably handled by a referee who was not at all self-assertive but albeit commendably firm, and the exchanges were invigorating and exciting right up to the very last kick.

Watson's discomfited shoulder and Higginbotham's suspension caused two Luton changes. Bailey making a welcome reappearance, while Mathieson was the choice for the inside berth. Teams:—

Luton—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Parker, Lamb; Hoar, Hill, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

Grimsby—Whalley; Dawson, Affleck; Bradford, Carmichael, Storer; Spink, Coffer,

Clark, Morrall, Blake.

Referee, Mr. T. H. Proctor, Lincoln.

The easy going made for fast football, and both sides developed the bustling, open style of game, but the visitors exhibited the cleverer combination. The Luton defenders quickly found they were up against a rare handful in the trickiness of Morrall, the go-ahead pushfulness of Clark and the speed of Spink and Blake. Molyneux and Lamb had to be at their best in desperate spoiling work to check the outside wingers, and Parker and the backs had not less of a gruelling time for twenty minutes, and it says something for their consistent steadiness and resource that during this time Bailey had only two anxious moments. On these occasions he found Clark a troublesome customer. The goalkeeper was quite brilliant in reaching over Clark's head and negotiating a lovely centre from Blake. Later Clark caught him as he was taking a high shot, and shook him up so that he lost possession of the ball, but the centre's charge was made when Bailey was not holding the ball, and it was penalised.

The severe pressure experienced by the Luton halves prevented them giving much assistance to their forwards, and the home attacks were spasmodic and short-lived. The kicking and tackling of the Grimsby backs were in keeping with their burly build, and they added to the discomfort of the Luton forwards by the success with which they exploited outside tactics. Still, there was promising enterprise in shooting when the home team got anywhere near goal. Mathieson setting an example in this respect, though he could not quite get on the target. As the half wore on it became evident that under pressure the Grimsby backs were not quite the terrors suggested by their early form. Bookman's speed enabled him to get round Dawson, bring the ball back from the line and cross it for Hoar to drop a half-volley into goal. Whalley was tackled by Simms as he caught it and dispossessed, and it was lucky for Grimsby that while he was out of goal Hill's shot was beaten down by Affleck. Hoar was experiencing great difficulty with the sun, but nevertheless he troubled Whalley with another high shot, and his centres became quite a feature. Simms also came prominently into the picture, and five minutes from the interval he had the satisfaction of seeing a left-foot drive from nearly twenty yards out curl away from the goalkeeper and pass inside the post. Whalley ought to have saved it, but as he fell he failed to field it, and it rolled under his hands. The goal was rather a lucky one, but Luton were just as unlucky not to have had another before the interval. With a couple of minutes to go, Hoar got across another gem of a centre which came rather awkwardly for Simms, but the centre turned the ball over for Mathieson to crash high into the net, but Simms was ruled offside.

Luton's opening of the second half showed they had got the full measure of the halting defence. Within a minute Mathieson had taken from another of Hoar's centres. Simms made the goalkeeper and went into the net, but Whalley could only hand the ball away a few yards, and the Luton centre was still resting in the back of the net when Hill sent a terrific shot against the crossbar. Grimsby had two other lucky escapes from a free-kick for a foul on Simms on the edge of the penalty area, and from a corner-kick by Hoar, which Whalley was unable to get away. There was a very hot scrimmage on the goal-line, and it seemed as if the ball must have been forced over, but it was impossible to tell, and the referee settled the matter by a free-kick awarded to Grimsby. Then Hill only just missed with a great shot which Whalley probably never saw, and the half was only fifteen minutes old when Simms went one better with another of his specialities. Parker lobbed up a free-kick, Simms caught it in the air with his left, and, lunging as he swung round, drove it beautifully just inside the post, right away from Whalley.

After this success Luton were right on top, and ten minutes later they should have gone further ahead, for Mathieson got right in front, with only the goalkeeper to beat, and blazed straight at Whalley, who made a magnificent one-handed save. This failure, coupled with another disappointment in the last seven minutes, when Simms cleverly ran through the opposition only to spoil a promising hat-trick prospect by a miserable aim, might easily have proved disastrous, for in the last quarter of an hour Grimsby set up a really magnificent rally. Lennon and Tirrell never lost their steadiness, but the visiting forwards were most persistent, and Bailey had a found their shooting better of his saves were magnificent. Several of them was one from Clark, which led to Grimsby scoring in the last five minutes. Bailey was simply brilliant in tipping the centre's shot over the bar, and he did just as finely in dealing with a corner-kick, but before he could get back Storer had pretty headed in.

Shorts as time was, an equaliser was by no means out of the question, for Grimsby still pressed very strongly, and it was a great relief when two minutes from the end, Bookman, availing himself of one of his few opportunities, showed the Grimsby defence a clean pair of heels, and, turning the ball over to his right, cleverly beat Whalley with an oblique grounder. Luton did all the pressing in the remaining moments, and Mathieson would have had no more than his deserts if he had made the final score more than

Luton 3, Grimsby 1.

It was a glorious game to watch, and the Town team did well in all departments. The forwards were not exactly a clever combination, but it was very pleasing to see the readiness with which they seized upon their opportunities. Some say the accuracy of their marksmanship left something to be desired, but this is bound to be the case when forwards are doing a lot of shooting, and it was good to see every man in the line not waiting for gifts. Bookman's goal emphasized a reminder that came from the crowd, "not to forget the left wing," and suggested that his colleagues do not get the best out of him. Mathieson certainly gave him more attention than he really gets, and did much better than in recent displays. Apart from his shooting, Hill was not of much assistance, and the pick of the trio were again Simms and Hoar. The latter was a ways dangerous and Simms was never a player better.

For the defence no praise could be too high. The passing of the halves was of none too

high a standard, but in defence they were a vast improvement. Molyneux was a little wonder, and Lamb came out of a trying ordeal with flying colours. Parker was not so much in the picture, but he played a steady game. At back Lennon and Tirrell were quite brilliant. The Scot can have no superiors in the South of his present form. Bailey was wonderful when his time of testing came, and it is to be doubted if any Luton supporter would wish to exchange his defence for Grimsby's.

MORE EXPERIMENTS WITH THE RESERVES.

The Town Reserves have had to make three journeys in eight days in search of South Eastern League points, and incidentally have scored their first success of the season away from home. This was at Reading, where Arthur Roe, returning to his old place at inside right with Bradley as his wing partner, jumped back into his delightful form of pre-war days, and not only scored two lovely goals, but in his all-round work was easily the outstanding forward on the field. Bradly also scored, and the result was 3-1 in Luton's favour. With Frank Hull back in the side, Semple was tried at inside left, a position in which he is understood to have played in Scotland, but he did not shine. Wilkins played one of his best games this season, and Prudley and Mathieson also did better than recently. As already mentioned, the two new halves tried made for improvement, and the defence all through was very reliable.

Higginbotham's suspension would in all probability have given Roe his chance to get back into the first team on Saturday had he come off at Brighton on Wednesday, but as luck would have it he was "right off." His partner, a player from the Reading district who was strongly recommended by the referee of the previous Saturday, was quite a failure, and Smith, a local, tried at right half, was also of little assistance, with the result that Roe tried to do things with the result that he failed. Added to this, Wilkins broke down on his very first run, and therefore Luton were even worse off than Brighton, who lost Bentley, their first team half, in the first few minutes, and also had Hall off for a part of the second half. Brighton had their first team centre, Doran, as well as Bentley, playing, and he opened the scoring after fifteen minutes. Mathieson equalised, and netted a second time after Ritchie had regained Brighton's lead, but the point was disallowed—for what reason was not obvious. Abbott kept a good goal, Hull did better than Semple at back, Walsh and Cockerill both shone at half, and Bradley was the pick of the forwards.

COUNTY CUPS.

There are fifteen entries for the Bedfordshire Senior Cup Competition, and Luton, Clarence, Bedford Town and Arlesey have been exempted until the second round. In the first round, on November 6th, Vauxhall Motors are at home to Potton, and in the second round on December 4th the draw for local clubs is: Waterlooville v. Luton Priory; Athletic, Luton Athletic v. Luton Church; Luton Amateurs v. Biggleswade or Stotfold; Sandy v. Vauxhall or Potton.

The Junior Cup entries number 79, and South Beds. clubs engaged in the extra preliminary round next Saturday are drawn:—Clydesdale v. Commercial Cars, Haslington v. Leighton Ivy Leaf, Barton Rovers v. Norton Rangers, Shillington v. Hayward Tyler, Aspley Guise v. Roadeale, Luton Amateurs v. Dunstable Comrades, Orient v. Slip End, Waller-street Brotherhood v. Frickers Athletic, Tottenham v. Stopley.

For the preliminary round on November 13th, the draw is:—Ceylon Athletic v. Clydesdale or Commer Cars, Iydale v. Westbourne Athletic, Cocos Works v. Houghton Regis, Barton or Norton Rangers v. Orient or Slip End, Luton Amateurs or Dunstable Comrades v. Tottenham or Stopley, Kensworth v. Dunstable Wesleyan, Brown and Green v. Christ Church, Shillington or Hayward Tyler v. Limbury United, Iydale or Westbourne Athletic v. Maulden, Silcoe v. Aspley Guise or Roadeale, Sundon v. Luton St. Mary, Dunstable Rovers v. Leighton Morris or Caddington, Dunstable St. Peter's v. Kershaw's, Westoning v. Skeffo, Vauxhall Motors v. Woburn Sands.

In Saturday F.A. cup-ties the Amateurs and Vauxhall Motors sustain heavy defeat at the hands of Athenian League teams. At Hampton the Amateurs had three goals registered against them in each half and were unable to respond. At Barnet the Vauxhall held their own until the last ten minutes of the first half, when the home team put on three goals and after the interval Barnet made the score up to 8-0. At Chesham Frickers Athletic did better. Baines opened the scoring for the Luton team and after Chesham had equalised, Tompkins and Baines scored further goals in the second half only for Chesham to make the final score three goals apiece.

AMATEUR CLUBS IN F.A. CUP COMPETITIONS.

The three Luton amateur clubs who succeeded in getting through the preliminary round of the F.A. Cup qualifying competition Amateurs, Frickers Athletic, and Vauxhall Motors—all had the misfortune on Monday to be drawn away from home in the first round decided on Saturday.

In the second round of the F.A. Amateur Cup qualifying game he decided next Saturday, Frickers Athletic have choice of ground against Vauxhall Motors, Luton Amateurs have to visit Northampton Old Boys, and Dunstable Waterlooville get a bye.

NOTINGS.

Dick Elvey has had quite an unexpectedly long absence from Bolton Wanderers' first team since injury necessitated his retirement on the last Saturday of last month. Baverstock seems to have seized upon his chance of showing that he is far from a spent force and has been giving displays at right back worthy of his prime days.

Archie Dyke, the outside right who played many fine games for Luton Town during the early war seasons, has once more become a club-made of Joe Mitchell, Coventry City having secured him from Stafford Rangers. Before the war Dyke had two seasons with Aston Villa, and two with Burnley Port Vale. He made his first appearance for Coventry