

SATURDAY'S VICTORY AT GRIMSBY.

For the first time this season Luton's Third Division record is in the Town Club's favour. It is a splendid recovery, considering the lee-way the team had to make since the inglorious opening of the season, and the fact that it is only a month since they restored the balance, and that it has been achieved at the expense of a team of the calibre of Grimsby Town should go a long way to dispose the somewhat gloomy croakings most of the club's supporters have been inclined to indulge in. Before Grimsby came to Luton a week ago, they claimed a preponderance of wins over Luton, and a slightly better record than the Town's, but the Whites have now left them well behind and jumped into seventh place in the table. Their record of five wins, three defeats and two draws, and a dozen points for ten games, puts them on a level with Plymouth Argyle and Watford except for the adverse goal average of 16 against 21.

Grimsby is by no means the longest journey Luton have to undertake as the crow flies, but the awkwardness of the railway connections makes it one of the most troublesome. Thus the Town team had to leave at half past seven on Saturday morning to get to the fishing port not a great while before the time for going on the field, and then they had to stay the night at Grimsby and travel most of Sunday to reach home by the mail at night.

Anyone who knows anything about Grimsby will tell you that their team has always had the reputation of being a very different side in all respects at home from what they are away, and this season has proved no exception to the rule. It was therefore extremely exasperating when the Town found themselves under the necessity of having to make two eleven-th hour changes. The directors had decided to rely on the successful side of a week earlier with the solitary exception of Percy Hill, whose relegation was fully expected, and the promotion of Arthur Roe was very gratifying to his unwavering admirers and believers, and could not be criticised by those who think differently in the light of the rosy reports of his recent displays with the Reserves at inside right. He has had a good deal of difficulty in finding his position this season, but he seems to have found his feet in the position in which he promised so well in the first war season. Unhappily misfortune for the second time prevented him taking his chance. A poor display at Brighton kept him out of the side in the first game against Grimsby, and an injury at Watford did the same for him on Saturday. Late in the week his hip broke down in training, and to make matters worse Parker took such a severe cut that he had to take to his bed. As a result Bradley got the chance denied to Roe of appearing in the team for the first time since the opening match at Swindon, and Wain, the young centre-half recently acquired from the Durham district, gained an earlier opportunity than he would otherwise have had of making the acquaintance of Third Division football.

Appended is the list of players:—

Luton.—Bailey; Lenson and Tirrell; Molyneux, Walsh, and Lamb; Hoar, Bailey, Simms, Mathison, and Bookman.

Grimsby; Whalley; Dawson, Affleck; Gillow, Carmichael, Storer; Spink, Collier, Clark, Morrall, Blake.

Referee, Mr. T. H. Prescott, Lincoln.

There were ten thousand spectators to witness a game which in its general features was more or less a replica of the thrilling struggle for supremacy at Luton the previous Saturday. A high wind played such pranks with a light ball that both sets of players found considerable difficulty in either judging its flight or getting it under control on a rather lively pitch, and the football was not of a high level, but what was lacking in the finer points was more than made up for by the fast and exciting character of the exchanges. The forwards made the pace extremely hot by the rousing way in which they opened up the game at every opportunity, and it was accentuated by the keen talking which met their unsparing energy. Sterling defence was exhibited, and in both goalmouths the duels were most exciting, and it was sheer opportunism that turned the scales in the visitors' favour.

Grimsby made one change from the side which played at Luton, Bradford giving place at right half to Gillow, and although Tirrell, who acted as Luton's third captain of the season, set them to face the strong wind they were the first to make the running. They cut out such a hot pace that they threatened

to run the visitors clean off their legs, and Bailey had a gruelling time in the opening exchanges. Spink's speedy runs and clever centres were the chief source of trouble, and the goalkeeper had made several fine saves when at the end of five minutes he was beaten by Collier. The latter got the ball from a melee, but it was palpable that he used his hand, and the referee promptly disallowed the point. After this escape Luton rallied finely. Simms and the halves gave the extreme wingers capital opportunities to develop their speed, and it came the turn of the home defence to go through the mill. The left wing in particular were very dangerous, and Mathieson twice had the hardest of luck in not opening the score. Once he hit the upright with a terrific drive, and directly after he headed just over the bar with a fine effort. Simms and Bookman also gave Whalley a good deal of anxiety. For some time it looked as if Luton must score, but they were not able to maintain the pressure, and towards the end of the half Grimsby did most of the attacking, and Bailey and his backs did well to keep the score sheet clean.

Grimsby again showed what speedy starters they are in the second half, and Bailey was once more called upon to give of his best. He was finely covered by his backs, and the visitors were once more able to take command of the exchanges. Simms came prominently in the picture with characteristic dashing runs, and from one of these Whalley had to go full length to save at the expense of a corner. There were other instances in which the Grimsby goal had narrow escapes, but once again the game veered round in the homesters' favour, and the Luton defence had splendidly held out against a powerful pressure for fully ten minutes, when with a quarter of an hour to go a breakaway decided things in the visitors' favour. Getting possession a long way out, Simms beat three opponents in mastery fashion, and scored a wonderfully clever goal, worthy to rank with his best. Grimsby by means gave up after this reverse, but the Luton defence was at its best, and simply impenetrable. The goal was never in any real danger, and just on time Bookman was within an ace of repeating his previous Saturday's performance. It was an exactly similar single handed effort, in which he dashed by the opposition, but his shot was kept cut by the upright, and thus left the result:

Grimsby 0, Luton 1.

It was Luton's first Third Division success away from home, and also the first time Grimsby have lost points on their own ground this season, so it goes without saying that it was a wonderfully fine performance. Chief honours rested with the defence which was unanimously voted as the best seen on the Grimsby ground this year. Bailey was equal to all emergencies, and was the personification of coolness in dealing with desperate situations, and Lennon and Tirrell were simply magnificent in both their kicking and tackling. The way in which the little man dashed in and bottled up Clark time after time was really marvellous, and the perfect understanding he and his partner have developed augurs ill for Semple's prospects of promotion. The halves again took the eye. All three were unceasing workers, and their helpfulness to the attack was a vast improvement. Most gratifying of all was the success of Walsh, the new centre half. It was a big ordeal for a youngster making his initial appearance in first-class football, but he showed no trace of nerves, and all through realized the expectations formed of him with the Reserves. Walsh has yet to make his first appearance on the Town ground, but if he can reproduce the form he has shown away his capture will be applauded.

The forwards more than held their own. If their combination was not polished, it was speedy and dashing, much better use being made of the outside wingers. Bradley's inclusion made for improvement, but the best wing was Mathieson and Bookman, who worked better together and furnished the most danger. Simms was too closely shadowed to do very much, and it says something for his resource that the attentions bestowed did not prevent him winning the game with one of his glorious goals. This was his eighth, and gives him half the number scored by the Town this season, and places him among the leading Third Division scorers. Fairclough, Southend, has nine, and Birch, Queen's Park Rangers Fleming, Swindon Town, and Simms eight.

If Rutherford is not suspended in the meantime, we may see two of last season's Luton players with Brighton and Hove Albion next Saturday. Williams was dropped for Longstaff at outside right on Saturday, but as Doran will be playing for Ireland he may regain his place in the front line.