

Football Features.

BY "OLD CROCK."

TOWN'S THIRD CONSECUTIVE WIN.

Some clubs have already announced signatures for next season. Luton Town is not amongst them, but there may be something doing within the next few days.

After Saturday's win at Charlton, the Town should finish up a respectable third, although two of the three remaining games are away. Northampton should yield three or four points, and the Town have a score to wipe out on their May Day visit to Aberdare.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC v. LUTON TOWN.

LUTON AGAIN BEAT THE LONDONERS

A steady downpour of rain completely spoilt the return match between Luton Town and Charlton Athletic at the Valley, and accurate play was out of the question. Both teams made alterations from the sides that met the previous week. Walker's return to the Luton half-back line allowing Foster to move back to the right-half position. Forward, Reid led the attack, in place of Mathieson, Higginbotham coming in at inside-right. Charlton had Dunn, for Hampson, at left-half, and J. W. Filliston, Redhill's amateur centre-forward, and Thomson, vice Cox and Steele, in the forward line.

Teams:—

Charlton Athletic.—Barnes; Burton and Goodman; Dowling, Whalley, and Dunn; Castle, Bailey, J. W. Filliston, Thomson, and Wilson.

Luton Town.—Bailey; Lennon and Tirrell; Foster, Walker and Roe; Hoar, Higginbotham, Reid, Butcher, and Bookman.

Referee: Mr. K. Tolfree, Southampton.

Play was quiet and scrappy at the start, and neither side seemed capable of organising a combined movement. Well meant passes went sadly astray, and the respective defences easily held the half-hearted forward efforts. The first incident of any note was when Danny Bailey broke through and wriggled himself into a good shooting position; his shot, however, ricocheted off a Luton defender, for a corner, which was easily cleared. This opened up a long period of pressure by the home club, and, try as they would, the Luton forwards were quite unable to raise the siege. Time and again they endeavoured to force their way through, but Burton and Goodman defended superbly, and Barnes, in the home goal, was not troubled. At the other end business at times was brisk. Thompson put Wilson in possession, in a likely position, and having seen that fail, tried a long shot himself with a like result. The Luton goal was in some danger from a discreet forward pass by Whalley, Lennon nipping in at the crucial moment, and clearing cleverly. Hoar snapped up the ball and raced away, beating Dunn and Goodman, and was bearing in on goal when Burton robbed him. Bailey was often in action, and was warmly applauded for two fine saves from headers by Bailey and Thompson. Walker was playing an industrious game for Luton, and on one occasion he sent Hoar away with a lovely, long pass. The winger made ground quickly and centred to Higginbotham, who headed wide. These incursions into the home territory were few and far between, and play generally was in the visitors' half. Filliston eluded the defence very neatly, his final effort proving weak, and shortly afterwards the amateur again tried his luck, a splendid drive just skimming the bar. The most dangerous move on the Luton side was when Reid made a determined attempt to break through on his own; Whalley hung on to him, and eventually forced him to kick behind, and Charlton were once more knocking at the door. A misunderstanding between Lennon and Tirrell might have had ugly results had not Bailey rushed out and cleared, and Burton's long legs stopped Bookman from developing a judicious pass by Reid. Walker was prominent hereabouts, with tricky defensive play, but, despite his craftiness the Luton goal had a narrow squeak during a hot attack, in which Bailey covered himself with glory, by fisting out three short-range shots from casters.

It is the unexpected that happens in football, as in everything else. Luton had been penned in for some time, when they suddenly broke loose. There was a scramble in the Charlton goal-mouth, and, 39 minutes from the start, Higginbotham deposited the ball in the net, very much to the surprise of the home crowd. It was the tonic that was needed to brighten things up, for the play had not been ultra interesting, and the spectators forgot the rain, and urged the home team to renewed efforts. Charlton responded with spirit, and Bailey sent in a good grounder which the other Bailey easily dealt with. Everybody, they say, gets one chance in a lifetime, and Wilson had his when Filliston centred right across the goal line. Wilson rushed in and missed the ball completely, when the merest touch would have put it into the net. Charlton kept up the pressure, and there was a loud cry of "Goal!" following a splendid shot by Filliston; the ball however had gone outside, and a quick transference of play drew Barnes from his goal. Luton were still in possession of their one goal lead at half-time.

Believing that attack is the best defence, Luton opened the second half in aggressive mood, and in the first minute Bookman brought Barnes to his knees with a hot ground shot, Butcher following with a long drive that dropped on the bar and bounced over. It was not long before Charlton resumed their hammering at the Luton goal, and Bailey had to jump about to get rid of a ticklish shot by Filliston, two opponents falling on top of him as he parted with the ball. The visiting custodian again distinguished himself by saving splendidly from Whalley, who put in a teaser from a corner. A feature of the first half was the solid defence put up by Burton and Goodman, the home backs, who kicked strongly and accurately, and were never in difficulties. In the second half they were by no means so reliable, and Luton enjoyed a bigger share of the game than hitherto. Burton, with plenty of time to clear, was prone to hang on to the ball, and then kick into touch when challenged, and Goodman once left it too long, and was rebbed by Hoar. Fortunately for Charlton his shot hit the side of the net. Reid tried a long drive, and then the home team attacked earnestly. Thompson put in a terrific shot, which cannoned off a defender for a corner, and Bailey dived full length to turn a header by Filliston round the post. It was all Charlton for a time, and Tirrell standing on the goal-line kicked clear from a well-paced free kick by Castle. Walker relieved the tension, and during a transference of operations Luton had two golden opportunities of increasing their lead. Reid beat the defence, and had only the goalkeeper to overcome. It seemed a gift, but Barnes did the only thing left to do—rushed from goal and smothered the shot. It was a smart clearance and was repeated within two minutes when Butcher found himself similarly placed.

These escapades roused Charlton, and during the last fifteen minutes they pressed hotly. Filliston muffed a good chance by lifting the ball over the bar when nicely placed, and Bailey fisted out a long drive by Burton, and a short range shot by Thompson. A splendid shot by Dowling was tipped over the bar, and a surprise shot by Filliston was also safely negotiated. Whalley headed over, and all Charlton's efforts were in vain. Result—Charlton Athletic 0, Luton Town 1.

As was the case with the first match, one cannot congratulate the winners, without commiserating with the losers. As a matter of fact, Luton were fortunate to lead at half-time, for the shot that scored was the only one Barnes had to deal with, and that was a scrubby sort of affair. Luton showed in greater advantage in the second half, and everything considered, perhaps a division of the points would have been a truer reflex of the play. It must not be overlooked in condoling with the home team, that it was not all ill-luck that barred their way. To a very

large extent it was Bailey, who must be written down as the hero of his side. Lennon and Tirrell were more reliable in the second half, and during the final spurt by Charlton they stood their ground gamely. Walker was the hero of the half-back line, and the extreme wingers the pick of the forwards.

On the Charlton side, Burton and Goodman were the strong men in the first half, but they fell away considerably afterwards. Whalley worked hard in the intermediate line, and Dunn was a bustling left-half in defence. It was not a day to make or judge reputations, and as far as Filliston is concerned it can be said, he came through the deal with credit.