

FOOTBALL FEATURES.

BY "OLD CRICK."

LUTON TOWN NEAR THE TOP OF THE TABLE.

Now, ye pessimists! What about my suggestion after the opening match of the season about Luton being at the top of the Third Division table? It carries one's mind back to the very old days of the Southern League to find the Town and Millwall running neck and neck at the top of the table. The Lions are just a trifle ahead on goal average, but if there had been no such things as referees' blunders or failure to see things to cause losses of points at Southampton and Newport, Luton would not only have had the best goal average but a clear two points lead in the bargain. Next Saturday will mean a real testing, for Luton and Millwall are both due to receive unbeaten sides, Plymouth Argyle and Portsmouth. The Town have already gained three points in comparison with last season's results, and a win over the Argyle will mean another gain, as last season's result was a draw.

Nothing would be more popular than to see the Town team recover last season's forward form against the Argyle. It may sound rather like a captious grumble to reflect upon forwards who have scored two consecutive 4-0 victories and registered more goals than any other team in the Third Division, but the fact remains that their general standard of play has not nearly realised expectations in their home exhibitions. The brilliant units are there and they burst into the limelight spasmodically, but there is not the welding that makes for an efficient, smooth-running machine.

Wednesday night's victory over Exeter City was to some extent a replica of that against Newport, in that a four goals margin was much in advance of the Town's just dues. For at least an hour of the game, the Grecians displayed superior midfield football, and had vastly the better of the exchanges, and while they have their forwards to thank for the indifferent use made of good openings, Harry Fryer must be counted extremely unlucky in having so many goals registered on his debit account.

Some minutes before the interval, he was beaten in running out to block Higginbotham. The ball passed close between his legs, and would have crossed the line all right, but Simms made sure of it doing so, and should have caused the point to be disallowed, for he was unquestionably offside. Four minutes after change of ends, a shot from Simms caught Gaskell on the arm, and the award of a penalty gave the centre his second goal. The intercepted shot would without doubt have been a scorer, but there is grave doubt as to whether Gaskell was a witting offender. Exeter also had some reason to dispute the goal which gave Simms his "hat trick" 12 minutes before time. Fryer made a fine effort in flinging himself across the goal, and just touching the ball on to the post. It rebounded along the line, and Fryer promptly turned and pushed it round the post, but the referee gave a goal, although many in line expressed a contrary view. Three minutes from the end, the old Clarence man made another great save from Simms, high up against the post, but he could not hold on to the ball, and Hoor rushed it through.

Injuries to Lottion and Walker gave Graham and Foster their first chance in the Third Division. The young Scot greatly pleased by his cool, brainy display, but Foster has clearly not yet been able to build up the stamina and strength required to do himself justice in a strenuous game. Roe was again the pick of the halves, and apart from the goal-scoring the most pleasing feature of the forwards' display was the brilliance with which Louis Bookman came out.