

THE UNITED LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. BRISTOL CITY.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Bristol City 3 goals.

Luton Town 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton: Perkins; Dow and Moore; Sharp, Williams and C. Ford; Brock, Molnes, Galbraith, Boutwood and Crump.

Bristol: Monteith; Barker and Caie; Stewart, McLean and Hamilton; Langham, Gard, Murphy, O'Brien and Potter.

Referee, Sergt. Barrow.

At one time of day, a visit from Bristol City would have been a big attraction at Luton, but public interest seems to be so much on the wane locally, that despite the gloriously fine weather, not more than five or six hundred people turned out to witness the match. Enthusiasm and confidence seem to have departed, and scarcely one of those who patronised the Bury Park enclosure had any faith in Luton's ability to win, more especially in view of the fact that there were fresh absentees from the team.

Kemplay was in bed with influenza, and Durrant was incapacitated by a damaged knee, and their accession to the ranks of the sick and injured completed a full string of forwards whose services were unavailable, viz., Ekins, W. Ford, Hawitt, Kemplay and Durrant. I don't know whether there ever was a football team dogged by such ill-luck, but I can only say that I have never heard of one. And the worst of it is, the ill-luck seems to become more and more pronounced at time goes on.

How in the world can a team be expected to show to advantage in the face of such disheartening circumstances? Loss upon loss, loss upon loss—loss of matches, loss of points, loss of players, and loss of supporters—it is enough to crush the life out of any team, and under these conditions it would be surprising indeed if Luton could hold their own against men who are full of confidence and vigour and buoyed up by the cheers of enthusiastic followers.

The Luton followers, as I have said, were not very numerous on Monday, and they were not particularly enthusiastic. They cheered a little, however, when at the outset the homesters attacked two or three times in succession, and especially when Williams got in a beautiful shot which Monteith saved. Then Bristol retaliated, Langham going away on the right and getting in a good centre. Williams cleared, but the City coming again, Dow miskicked and let in Potter, who just failed to reach the ball before it went over the line.

Luton going to the other end, Crump, receiving from a throw-in, raced away and sent in a beautiful shot, but Monteith negotiated, and the ball was quickly taken up the field, where Perkins was called upon to save a shot from Gard. This he did, but a moment later he was clearing from a good centre just as the forwards were making a rush in his direction, and the ball from his kick struck Gard and rebounded into the net.

Thus the first goal of the match was a very lucky one, and as usual against Luton. Apparently nothing daunted, the homesters went full steam ahead, and following upon a pretty run by the whole of the forwards, McInnes touched the ball to Boutwood, who had a grand opening, but unfortunately he stopped too long to take aim, and Barker nipped in and kicked away. This rather cooled Luton's courage, and Bristol trundling the ball to the other end, had a number of shots at goal, but Perkins kept his head well, and effected several good saves.

Luton then took another turn, and Crump shot into the goal-keeper's hands, but Brock fell down in the effort to charge the custodian, and the latter was able to clear. Dow next placed nicely from hands against Caie, but Bristol cleared, only to be beaten back again, and Galbraith, who had worked his way on to the left wing, putting across to the other side, Brock headed to the centre, and McInnes struck the inside of the upright with a good shot which Monteith then managed to get away. Hard luck again, for a goal was fully deserved.

From this point up to half-time play was pretty evenly distributed, both goals being attacked in turn, but the interval arrived with the score unaltered. Luton had really been playing a good deal better than might have been expected, and with only one goal against them there was still some hope that they would be able to pull the game out of the fire. They went away with a rush, too, as soon as play was resumed, and after Brock and Crump had put in good centres, McInnes sent in a hot shot which brought Monteith to the earth. The custodian, however, had his wits about him, and succeeded in throwing behind.

Then came another piece of good fortune for the visitors, Moore in clearing from an attack, kicking the ball on to one of the forwards, off whom it rebounded. Perkins saved just as it was going over the goal-line, but before he could get rid of the ball Potter was on him and dashed it into the net. Shortly afterwards Bristol made another successful assault, Potter putting in a centre which Murphy converted with a good hard drive. Perkins had one or two difficult shots to deal with after this, and then Luton going away in first-rate style, Brock middled, and McInnes scored a beautiful goal. This success inspired the homesters to renewed efforts, and once or twice they came near improving their position. They were unable to do so, however, and when

time was called the City were left in possession of a somewhat lucky victory.

The game was not a very exciting one, and all through was fought more in the spirit of a friendly than a League match. Undoubtedly Bristol City were the better team, and it is just possible that they did not exert themselves to the full extent of their powers. Barker, the ex-soldier, who on several occasions played for Luton, gave a good exhibition at back, kicking with equal facility with either foot, or for the matter of that with both feet at once, and never being at fault, and Caie, the ex-Arsenal centre-forward, also performed well as Barker's partner. The halves and forwards gave a very creditable show, and Monteith did capitally in goal.

As for Luton, Perkins was smart as ever between the sticks, though he made a mistake when Bristol got their first goal. The backs were a good deal below concert-pitch, Moore being rather erratic and Dow not as safe as usual. Charlie Ford did some clever things at half-back, and Williams was energetic and persevering. Brock was responsible for two or three brilliant runs, and otherwise rendered a good account of himself. McInnes was always doing his best to make openings for himself or others, Crump put in a number of capital centres and shots, and Galbraith did much better than could reasonably have been anticipated at centre-forward. Boutwood at inside-left showed a good knowledge of the game, kept his head well, and altogether gave a very promising show, entitling him to another trial at the first opportunity.

Whether he will get it or not is a different thing. I remember that against Glossop North End, Ralley played remarkably well at centre-half, but strange to say he has not had another chance. In the present position of affairs, it seems to me that the directors ought to take every possible opportunity of developing local talent, and I cannot understand the reluctance which has been shown in taking advantage of the assistance of the three or four very promising Luton youths whose services are at the disposal of the directors.