

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

BRISTOL ROVERS v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Bristol on Saturday. Result:—

Bristol Rovers	1 goal.
Luton Town	nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Bristol Rovers: Gray; Kifford and A. Griffiths; Draycott, Robertson, and Neilson; Clark, Jones, Boucher, H. Griffiths, and Paul.

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Olifford, Holdstock, and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Barker, Dempsey, and Saxton.

Such is the confidence inspired by the Luton team that many of their supporters expected them to go to Bristol on Saturday and gain at least one point at the expense of the Rovers, who are considerably higher on the League table and are, in fact, only fourth from the top. Such a performance would have been a startler for the football world, and would have surrounded the Lutonians with a halo of glory.

And yet, as events proved, there was a good deal of ground for the optimistic anticipations of the Luton people, for though the visitors to Bristol did not get the coveted point, they came very near it, and indeed had all the best of the game. If the shooting had been a little more up to the mark, Luton would have had not one point only, but a couple.

The Bristol correspondent of the "Daily Express" says:—"Considerable interest was manifested on Saturday in the visit of Luton to Bristol, this being their first visit to the western city since their inclusion in the Southern League; and, despite the unsettled weather, there was a large crowd on the Rovers' enclosure. Luton having defeated Bristol City on their own heath this season, the supporters of the Rovers were somewhat anxious as to the result, and, as events proved, there was some ground for this feeling, the Rovers only getting home by one goal.

"On the play, Luton, who had nearly three parts of the game, certainly deserved to win. They could do everything but score, and had it not been for the brilliant work of Gray, who saved again and again for the Rovers, their efforts would have resulted in victory. Perhaps the wretched state of the ground had something to do with the Rovers' display. There was evidently something wrong with them, as they never seemed at home with the leather.

"The Strawplaiters' forward play was vastly superior to that of the Rovers; their men were much quicker on the ball, and altogether showed much the best form. The Rovers' forwards seemed unable to travel on the heavy ground. Their shooting was also very erratic at times, several misses being made. Saxton, the old Bedminster forward, played a grand game for Luton. Holdstock, their centre-half, and Lindsay, back, were, however, the best men on the field, their exhibition being very fine."

The Clifton correspondent of the "Athletic News" describes it as "A Lucky Win for Bristol Rovers." He says:—"During the first hour and a quarter of the match, Bristol were acting on the defensive three-fourths of the time. Both sets of players blundered badly on the slippery ground. Kifford and A. Griffiths were often at fault, and the visitors should have profited by more than one of their mistakes. Their forwards, however, constantly got offside, and so wasted the chances which presented themselves. Still, Gray was often troubled, and he experienced considerable difficulty in dealing with the wet ball. Blessington, who was the leader of the Luton attack, was often prominent in everything but shooting. He left more of that to Brown and Dempsey, but when half-time was reached neither side could claim a goal, though the visitors had certainly done most of the pressing. Following the interval, a capital effort by Luton left Dempsey in possession a few yards from Gray. He lifted the ball high over the bar, and following this escape, the Rovers attacked strongly. They got a corner, and Paul, keeping the ball in play, passed to H. Griffiths, who scored. Blessington and Dempsey were quite the best of the Luton forwards, though Saxton did far better work than he was accustomed to perform last season for Bedminster. Their half-backs were never idle, while the backs played a vigorous game, particularly Lindsay, who kicked splendidly. The only man on the Rovers' side who quite showed his true form was Gray, and he gave a wonderful display in goal."

The "Morning Leader" correspondent says:—"On the first half form Luton should have won, and even taking the game all through they ought to have won. . . The Luton backs presented a most resolute front to the home attack and gave them absolutely no latitude, nor longitude either for the matter of that, as their halves headed admirably. Brown was good at periods in the front rank, but sometimes his shooting was suggestive of water in its weakness. Forward Saxton and Blessington were not lazy."

In the other Southern League matches, three visiting teams secured victories, Southampton beating Queen's Park Rangers by a goal to nil, the Spurs vanquishing New Brompton by 2 to 1, and Bristol City beating Gravesend by 3 to 1, whilst at Kettering, Swindon must have surprised themselves by making a pointless draw. Millwall at home beat Chatham by 6 to 2, Portsmouth had all their work cut out to beat West Ham by 3 to 2, and Reading just got the better of Watford by a goal to nil.