

The Southern League.

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Bristol Rovers	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Frail; Hood and Lindsay; F. Hawkes, White and R. Hawkes; Durraat, Blessington, Moody, Eling, and Allsopp.

Bristol—Cartlidge; Dunn and Griffiths; Davies, McLean, and Lyon; Muir, Howie, Corbet, Wileox and Marriott.

Referee. Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (London).

Seeing that Luton had not won a League match since Foxing-day, the two thousand spectators who assembled on the Dunstable-road ground on Saturday could not have been in a particularly hopeful frame of mind. The Rovers have generally given us just about as much as we could manage, and the prospects of their going under on this occasion were not what Luton could regard as very bright.

The weather was fine at the outset, but the wind was very strong and extremely troublesome, so troublesome, indeed, that when Lindsay won the toss and took choice of ends, the spectators could hardly persuade themselves that he had not made a mistake. Apparently, however, he did the right thing, for Luton had decidedly the better of the play in the early stages of the game. But the most exciting incident during the first ten minutes was a terrible dog fight beneath the grand stand, and many were the fears expressed for the life of the smaller of the two combatants.

When at last a separation was effected, we were able to give our undivided attention to the football, which was really of an attractive character. Luton especially were playing up in fine style, and threatened the Bristol goal again and again. From a corner, Allsopp placed the ball right under the bar, and when Cartlidge fisted out, it went bobbing about from head to head until Eling at last sent it over the bar.

Soon afterwards a beautiful shot by Bob Hawkes went behind off the custodian, and from the corner Allsopp again placed to a nicety, and Blessington had hard luck with a header, the ball going just by the upright. Still Luton pressed, and Cartlidge fumbling a shot from Eling, Durrant made an effort to turn the opportunity to account, but was a moment too late.

Blessington next had a chance to shoot, but Jimmy seems to have developed an extraordinary dislike to that branch of the business, and his pass was not improved upon. Allsopp, however, secured another corner, but neutralised the advantage by placing behind. Then the Rovers got a look-in, and a bad pass back by Eling nearly led to disaster, Lindsay not having a chance to get to the ball, and Muir getting in an exceedingly dangerous position, but Fred Hawkes rushed across and cleared in the nick of time.

Lindsay cleared nicely from Wilcox, but the Rovers came again, and Frail very cleverly negotiated an attempt by Howie. Then Luton once more took up the running, going down on the left and the ball being placed in the mouth of goal. The Rovers made strenuous efforts to clear, but the leather went out to Moody, who shot a splendid goal, the ball striking the inside of the bar and dropping behind the custodian.

The spectators cheered, as well they might, but their hopes of more to follow were not realised. Indeed, the goal seemed to put a good deal more life into the Rovers than the homesters, and Frail was several times called upon to save before the interval.

The rain, which had long been threatening, now began to make matters very unpleasant, for players as well as onlookers, the ball getting greasy and the ground slippery. Perhaps it was this that caused Luton to fall away so badly, for the second half had not been long in progress when the Rovers took advantage of extraordinary slackness on the part of the Luton defence, and Wilcox equalized with a lightning shot.

The goal, although a good one so far as the shot went, was practically a gift, for the opening ought never to have been allowed. The worst of it was, too, that Luton did not mend, and the Rovers were speedily down again. Lyon hitting the cross-bar with a terrific shot. Then a miskick by Lindsay turned the ball in towards the Luton goal, when the Rovers' left wing looked certain for another point, but Frail saved in capital style.

Luton retaliated, and Durrant had a grand opening from a pass by Moody, but sent wide. A moment later, Allsopp was similarly well placed, and shot high over. Then the homesters forced a corner, and Durrant judged the kick nicely, but a foul was given against Moody. A little later, the Luton centre forward got through, and might very well have run the ball in, but he shot at too long a range, and Cartlidge easily cleared.

After this Hood made a very bad mistake in trying to pass back to Frail, who ran out and stopped the forward, but the ball looked as though it were going to roll into the open goal. Luckily, however, it went just by the post. After a corner given by Lindsay, Luton went to the other end, where two or three scrimmages took place right in the mouth of goal, and once, at any rate, Cartlidge was very fortunate in saving.

Soon afterwards, Hood again let his side down badly, and it seemed that nothing could prevent Corbett from scoring, but Lindsay ran back and brought him down just against the penalty line. The offence appeared to have happened about a yard inside the line, but the referee gave Luton the benefit of the doubt, and awarded a free kick, from which the homesters cleared.

There was nothing further of interest, and the match ended in a draw, a result which perhaps fairly represented the run of the game, for though Luton were the better team in the first half, they went to pieces in the second. Hood, probably, was largely responsible for this, so far as the defence was concerned, for though he showed remarkably good form in the first half, he was clean out of the running in the second. Moreover, Lindsay, in this latter part of the game, seemed to suffer from the change to left back.

The halves all did well, but among the forwards, Fling, who started well, could not stand the pace. Moody was the best of the front string. Allsopp made some good runs and got in some very decent centres, but when he went through on his own, he generally finished weakly. Durrant, with the exception of a few minutes towards the finish, was clean off colour, though he and Blessington got in several pretty runs. But why won't Blessington shoot? He used to be one of the best, but now seems to be quite afraid to try his luck.

For the visitors, Cartlidge played a fine game in goal, and McLean and Lyon were brilliant at half-back.