

Football Notes and News,

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE:

LUTON TOWN v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Luton Town left the fray on Saturday with a still unbeaten record, and are all but two at the top of the Southern League! This is a splendid performance, and the Luton team command not only respect, but the admiration of all clubs in the south. I am no prophet—and it is more than likely we shall get a fall or two before the season is closed—but I am beginning to think that we shall not have to haul our colours down this side of Christmas. One reason for arriving at that conclusion is, of course, that with the exception of one, all our League matches between now and the end of the year will be played on the Bury Park ground. The exception is New Brompton, which will not perhaps cause us a great deal of anxiety. At the same time, we have got one or two stiff ordeals to go through at home. If we can only keep the flag flying at the top until Jan. 2nd, when we meet Southampton, I am confident we shall finish in an excellent position.

On Saturday when Luton met Bristol Rovers, the teams turned out as under:—

Luton: Thompson; Bennett and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Durrant Eaton, Storey, Turner, and Allsopp.

Bristol: Cartlidge; Dunn and Pudan; Tait, Appleby, and Gray; Elmore. Beats, Smith and Marriott.

Mr. F. Crabtree (Ealing), one of the best referees of the English football field, had charge of the whistle.

The visitors won the spin, and set the Luton men to defend the farm goal. This was distinctly to the advantage of the Rovers, enabling them, as it did, to kick with a strong wind. but where was the downpour of rain at the commencement, which a contemporary described after the match?

Bristol were not long in calling upon Thompson, but they found him all there. A foul throw in by the visitors followed, and Luton broke clean away. Durrant placed well, but in the melee White put over. It was, however, a narrow shave for the Bristol goal.

Play having proceeded in Luton's quarter for a short time, the homesters suddenly assumed the aggressive, and White again called upon Cartlidge to negotiate a tricky shot. Then Durrant had a pop, and a little later Eaton sent wide.

Returning to the attack Bristol forced a corner, which was only cleared at the expense of another flag kick. Luton were being now severely tested, and it seemed a miracle that the leather was not got through. Thompson had to stoop to save, giving another corner.

At the other end Storey, Eaton, and Durrant had a try, but without success, two attempts being needlessly spoiled by offside. Turner failed to take advantage of a brilliant effort by Durrant. When Luton visited the railway end the next time, through Storey breaking away, Durrant's shot almost grazed the post, and the same player shot behind a little later. Storey was again offside, when Turner could have easily scored.

Dunn eventually relieved the pressure, and Thompson was tested pretty freely. Wilson and Marriott both shot wide, and the Luton custodian had also to handle from Elmore. Half-time arrived with

NO SCORE.

After resuming, both goals were visited in turn, and though Thompson had little to do, Cartlidge did not get off so easily, having to save again and again. Storey having fouled the Bristol custodian, the Rovers quickly broke away, but Wilson found Thompson waiting for him. A series of give and take play ensued, until the surprise came.

Eaton sent up, and Turner put through with a splendid individual effort. To my mind it was very doubtful if Turner was not offside, and I fancy that was the opinion of a good many. However, the referee gave the point without any hesitation, and another point was that there was no appeal for offside. Both sides afterwards went at it for all they were worth, but neither got through, and the game, brimful with excitement up to the last moment, ended—

Luton..	...	..	..	..	..	1 goal,
Bristol Rovers...	..	..	..	..	..	nil.

It was one of the best matches I have seen on the Bury Park enclosure this season, and was also very "clean." There were but few fouls; there was practically no rough play, and the match was fought with the best of spirit and temper on both sides. Dunn and Pudan were very tricky in putting Luton offside when once or twice the homesters were really dangerous. Both the Bristol backs played a good game, and so did Gray, the left half, who gave a dashing display. Wilson was undoubtedly the best amongst the forwards. I must also give credit to Cartlidge, who was never caught napping.

I liked the visitors's style of play, their exhibition at times being very pretty. So far as playing the game is concerned, my opinion is that Bristol were decidedly the best, but teams do not now play "the game"—they play to score. In the first half they certainly showed fine form, but they were too weak to get through the Luton defence.

As to our own men, a great deal might be written. I am proud to say that Durrant was again by far the best forward on the field, and was well backed up by his lieutenant, Sammy Eaton. I noticed, too, that Allsopp was given more to do than usual. Turner played a good game, but Storey, I regret to say, was suffering from a bad complaint. He will have to get back into his old form. The quintette, I am afraid, missed McKee, and had he been able to take the centre position I doubt not but that we should have come off better.

With regard to the halves, White played a good game, and Fred Hawkes was also much in evidence, but Bob Hawkes was distinctly off colour. It is a long time since I have seen Bob made to look so ridiculous, time after time, as he was by the tricky movements of Elmore and Wilson on Saturday. The backs were up to their usual form, and comment upon Thompson's custodianship would be superfluous.