

LUTON BREAK A RECORD.

DEFEAT BRISTOL ROVERS.

Luton have never before, I believe, vanquished the Rovers from Bristol, but on Saturday they broke their record, and rose two points on the League table at the expense of their visitors. The rain fell before the game began, and things climatic looked ominous for the players and spectators. Fortunately, the clouds vanished partially, though once the rain came on.

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The following is the way the teams turned out:—

LUTON.

Thompson

Bennett

McEwen

F. Hawkes

White

R. Hawkes

Durrant

Eaton

Storey

Turner

Allsopp

O

Marriott

Smith

Beats

Elmore

Wilson

Gray

Appleby

Tait

Pudan

Dunn

Cartlidge.

BRISTOL ROVERS.

Referee : Mr. F. Crabtree, Ealing.

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For once the Luton captain lost the toss, and the Rovers decided to take advantage of the strong wind and play towards the farm goal. The ball was swiftly taken away from the Luton forwards and passed beautifully down the field by the Rovers until McEwen was reached, and he promptly did the needful. Then Luton attacked, but offside nullified all efforts. Turner was very prominent with a grand piece of tricky work, but he passed too weakly to Storey, and the half-back nipped in and robbed them. The Rover put in a long kick and rush movement and Thompson stepped out and cleared just in time.

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This was a very narrow escape for the home side. The ball was not got out of the Luton territory, but was eventually placed over the bar. Gray failed to throw the ball in properly and a free-kick was given against the Rovers. Bennett took the kick and a period of pressure ensued. Durrant eventually centre and White, from 12 yards out, placed over the goal. Durrant came in for an illegal charge. The Rovers were in fine form and smart on the ball. The Luton men were all keenly looked after, and there was no much given away by either side. Turner, who was working very hard, passed to Allsopp, but the ball went into touch.

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Following the throw-in White shot the ball into the goalkeeper's hands. Then the defence sent the ball along to the forwards, and McEwen and White were forced to kick out. The game was sternly fought every inch of the way, play being fast. First at one end and then back again to the other went the ball. R. Hawkes fouled an opponent, and a free-kick was given and taken by Dunn, who placed wide. The White was forced to give a corner, and from the kick Thompson fisted out a dangerous centre. Another corner followed, but this time Wilson placed behind.

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Play continued in the Luton half of the field, and the defence was tried pretty severely. Beats put in fine grounder just inside the goal, and Thompson had to fall full length to keep the ball out. Elmore rushed up to complete the attack, but the Luton goalkeeper partially recovered himself and saved the goal. Three corners in quick succession resulted for the visitors, but so sturdy was the Luton defence that nothing resulted from these persistent efforts. A free on Eaton eventually relieved the pressure. Bennett took the kick, but Durrant was given off-side.

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Storey placed a very weak shot in at goal, and Durrant anxious to convert it, stepped in but was off-side, though he took good care to place the ball in the net. Turner also shot well, but the ball went wide. The wind carried the ball right out of its course or would have just found the corner of the net. The Rovers broke away on the right, and McEwen had a kick out, the ball eventually going behind. Durrant put in a hard shot, which went flying over the goal. Storey fouled Appleby, but Durrant speedily brought the ball back again.

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Bennett was too smart for Marriott, who was continually being fed, and returned the sphere to Durrant and again the Luton outside right kept things hot for the visitors. He placed across a particularly neat pass, and Turner was confronted by the unguarded goal. To the disappointment of the crowd, and his own too, he shot clean over the bar. If he had tried to do it he could not have succeeded. Durrant fouled Gray, and thus relieved a good deal of pressure, but from the free kick the Rovers got off-side.

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Storey was too prone to keep offside and the referee more than once penalised him for it. Marriott was fed time after time, but F. Hawkes continually robbed him. Once he got in a shot which went wide. Durrant tried one of his runs but the ball struck the post and went behind. Turner put in a good attempt but Storey, when in an offside position, interfered with the ball and was penalised. Close on half-time Thompson made a grand save from an equally grand shot. At half-time the score stood

LUTON 0; ROVERS 0.

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The early stages of the second half were noticeable for a run down the wing by Gray. Beating the forwards he raced away down towards the Luton goal. Nobody interfered with him, all dropping back to defend the goal, but eventually he placed wide. Allsopp came into collision with Cartlidge and the referee awarded a free-kick probably for impeding. Eaton was working very hard indeed and he put in a useful piece of play and transferred to Durrant who shot wide. Allsopp also shot wide.

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Not at all discouraged by these attacks, the Rovers came away, but their onslaught resulted in Bennett clearing. Storey received the ball, and endeavoured to get away, but he eventually met the fate of all individual efforts—he was charged off the ball. Eaton headed in from a pass by R. Hawkes, but Cartlidge saved. R. Hawkes again shot in, but put over the bar. Storey charged the goalkeeper, and a foul was given. Then the tit-bit of the afternoon happened. Allsopp, away on the line, secured the ball and sent across to the centre. Storey. I am told, was standing off-side, and back-heeled the ball to Turner. The latter performed an old trick for placing the attackers well on-side. He kicked the ball against Dunn and then made a run for the sphere, and securing about 12 yards from the line shot into the corner of the net.

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Such a demonstration followed as we have not been accustomed to seeing for several past seasons. Hats and caps flew in the air, and the players nearly pulled Turner to pieces as a means of showing their pleasure at his success. The players were encouraged to try again, and Eaton in particular worked hard to compass the downfall of the Rovers' goal. Cartlidge kicked away his centre, and from this point Bristol rose to the occasion, and F. Hawkes was compelled to kick out.

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After Storey had once more been given offside Allsopp made a dashing run down the wing, but placed wide. Dunn took a free kick and the wind carried the ball over the Luton goal-line. A foul for the Rovers was balanced by one for the Luton team. Storey received a fine pass by Allsopp, and he transferred to the other side of the field where Durrant shaved the post. Eaton and a Rover got at loggerheads and after a lecture from the referee shook hands. The Luton forwards put in a nice bit of passing, which they might

give us more often, but thought nothing came of it in the combination showed that the best backs and halves are beaten by such tactics.

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The referee made a mistake in giving a Luton man offside, but he was fair to the extent that he gave a similar decision which favoured Luton. The remaining moments of the game were fought with the same amount of spirit as that which characterised the earlier stages of the play, but all efforts proved unavailing. The defence could not again be beaten and the match ended:—

LUTON 1 : BRISTOL ROVERS 0.

The Luton side was a bit the better one. The forwards played a good game, though Storey was not over-energetic, and gave away several chances by remaining off-side. Turner tried very hard all the way through, and though he made a bad miss in the first half he scored the winning goal, and that was everything. Durrant did a lot of useful work, whilst Allsopp, on the other side, slung across some good centres. Eaton worked very hard all through the game, always being in the attack, and dropping back in defence when circumstances warranted it.

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Bob Hawkes, who wore his county badge, was clean off-colour in the early part of the first half, but he improved afterwards. The other half-backs were in good form. Bennett and McEwen proved a most reliable pair of backs, and Thompson in goal was as safe as a rock. Gray was the best of the Rovers, though Dunn defended well. The forwards lacked cohesion, and though they were given plenty of chances by the half-backs they failed to penetrate the Luton defence.

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On Saturday in the Southern League the results approached the sensational. No fewer than eight goals were scored at Southampton, where Plymouth Argyle gained a wonderful victory, netting the ball five times. Millwall atoned for their home defeat from Fulham by scoring four clear goals at Swindon, and an almost equally surprising result was the draw made by the Queen's Park Rangers at Fulham. The Hotspurs of Tottenham are still the despair of their friends, and the latest loss of a point to Brighton is most discouraging. Brentford showed improved form, and Wellingborough emphasised the excellence of their defence.

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"Rover," in the *Morning Leader*, after dealing with Saturday's Southern League matches, says:—"The question of the championship is as open as ever. The gallant and unexpected showing of Luton has paralysed the critics. It is too bad of the Bedford men. They have no right on paper to be occupying the position they now hold, but all the same, they refuse to lie down, and they continue to bowl over some of the strongest clubs in the League. Really, little Luton, you astonish us! Last season the Bedford men did nothing to make us regard them as one of the swells of the League, and the team has changed so little since then that we cannot account for their success. That they deserve all they have achieved goes without saying, and no one would be more delighted than myself to see them resume their old place at, or near, the top of Southern clubs, for it must be remembered that Luton was a first-class club before most of our present-day cracks were out of their swaddling clothes. Was it 10 or 12 years ago that Millwall and Luton were out by themselves at the top of the tree? It would not at all be a bad thing for the game to see those two clubs again competing for supremacy in the Southern League, but I fancy Argyle and Southampton—yes, even Southampton—may have something to say in the matter."

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There are plenty of clubs with a good chance of winning the Southern League championship just now, and amongst them none have shown a bolder front on foreign ground than Reading. On Saturday last the Biscuiteers pulled off a smart victory at Kettering by the odd trick, and pursuing their good Midland fortune on Monday at Wellingborough, they also managed to beat this strong club by 2-1. It was a valuable result to Reading, who have now won five victories, and are in the agreeable position this morning of leaders, although Luton, with a match in hand, are only a point behind, and alone have the merit of being unbeaten in the League.

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The following appeared in *Football Chat*:—"Luton still lead the way, but they had to go all out to convince Bristol Rovers of their superiority. It was one of the fiercest battles that the strawplaiters have indulged in this season, and there was considerable relief when Turner subscribed that brilliant individual goal that won the victory. It was really a great game, and only a slight superiority of the Luton front rank enabled them to win. Bristol Rovers' defence was equally as determined as Luton's to prevent scoring, and the changes between the respective attacks and defences provided many thrilling scenes. I should say Luton has the strongest and most solid defence in the country at the moment. Thompson is at his best in goal, and I don't know two better backs than McEwen and Bennett, but Bob Hawkes was hardly so good as usual in this game. The forwards, however, were very smart, and Durrant is still the best outside-left I know. Gray, Dunn, Cartlidge, and Wilson were the star artistes amongst the Rovers, who are also a hot side."

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Luton to-morrow (Saturday) play Hitchin in the English Cup, and the game is looked upon as a foregone conclusion for the home side. Hitchin paid the Amateurs £10 to go to Hitchin and took an £8 gate; now Luton have guaranteed the visitors a £25 gate. Luton have arranged a match for November with the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards on the latter's ground.

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