

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Last season when Luton visited the Western seaport city, they lost to the tune of 4 to 1, and when Bristol played the return here the match was a draw of one each. I was therefore not at all surprised when the telegram was flashed over the wires on Saturday evening announcing that the Luton men had again met with defeat—the third time this season. Still, no one but the most convinced optimist could hardly have expected any other result, because the Rovers have played a most consistent game this season, having only lost 8 out of the 25 matches played, and although this is much below Luton's record, Bristol have yet some "snips" to come. Then, too, the men from Luton have drawn 8 of their games, whilst the Rovers have only drawn 3.

To the credit of Luton be it at once said that Saturday's score of 3-1 does not adequately represent the play. From the commencement the winning of the toss must of necessity have had a great deal to do with the result. The weather was very unfavourable, and the wind blew almost a hurricane right across the field, from goal to goal. Accordingly the team who had choice of ends would naturally do its utmost in attacking in the first moiety, and fall back on the defensive in the second. This was in a large measure what really happened.

Yet this is just where a little credit comes in for Luton. During the first 45 minutes the Rovers only managed to score twice, which speaks a great deal for the Luton defence; though when the teams changed over the visitors only managed to score once; but the Bedfordshire men had played such a desperate game against the elements in the first half that their dash and energy had depreciated to a considerable extent.

There was a slight alteration in the visiting team. Allsopp came back, and Bert Holdstock played in place of White, who was injured in the Wellingborough friendly last week. McKee was given his position at centre again, having Eaton on the right and Turner on the left. The home team was, of course, at full strength, and included: Cartlidge; Dunn and Pudan; Tait, Appleby, and Grey; Wilson, Elmore, Beats, Smith and Marriott.

About 4,000 spectators lined the ropes, which was reckoned a good gate considering the unfavourable atmospheric conditions.

The Rovers, winning the toss, kicked with the wind, and for the first 20 minutes play was all in Luton's territory—so much so that Cartlidge was not once called upon during that period. Bennett and McEwen played for all they were worth, and Thompson saved some well-directed shots. Elmore and Beats were very prominent, and both made a determined attack. Luton's custodian cleared with difficulty. Shortly afterwards Marriott broke away, and put in a well-judged centre. Though Beats and Smith both failed and missed the ball, Wilson got up in the nick of time, and placed the ball in the net, out of the reach of Thompson.

Luton's forwards were unable to do much, and the visitors were playing a practically defensive game. Marriott gave Thompson a "stinger," and immediately Beats brought our goalkeeper to his knees. The visitors got over the line once or twice, and Durrant ought to have taken advantage of the opportunity that fell his way. Shortly afterwards the homesters made one great combined movement, ending in Smith adding No. 2 for the Rovers. This was a splendid piece of work on the part of the forwards, and they well deserved the point.

But Bristol were by this time exhausted, and for a while Luton had an equal share of the game. Durrant and Eaton were now getting into form, and they made some dashing runs, but the homesters set up a stubborn defence. Both McKee and Eaton tested Cartlidge, but found him safe. Luton were now playing splendidly, and had the worst of luck by their centre-forward being pulled up for offside when in an excellent position. For the remainder of the first half Bristol were only once really dangerous.

Half-time: Bristol 2, Luton 0.

Upon resuming, the tables were practically turned on the homesters. Profiting by the wind, Luton forced matters, Durrant being conspicuous, and Cartlidge was kept busy. The visiting forwards were all playing a clever game, and Dunn and Pudan had many a severe tussle with Durrant, McKee, and Allsopp. Once the ball missed by inches. It was fortunate for Bristol that their backs were able to kick so well, and unfortunate for Luton that their forwards were not able to do better when in front of goal. The shots literally poured in on the home custodian, and it reflected no little credit on his judgment that he kept his goal intact through it all. Eventually Allsopp reduced the Rovers' lead after a perfect bombardment of the home goal.

This success seemed to put heart into the visitors, and they did their utmost to draw level; but Bristol were playing with great confidence, and soon assumed the aggressive, Wilson completely beating Thompson. Though the rain came down in torrents, rendering the ground very heavy, the exchanges continued fast. Several corners fell to Luton's lot, but none of these came to anything. The closing stages was most exciting, but nothing material occurred, and the game ended:—

Bristol Rovers 3, Luton 1.