

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

FOOTBALL.

LUTON AT BRISTOL.

THE THIRD DEFEAT.

Little Mac and his merry men were set a task in journeying into the far West to meet the Rovers at Bristol on their own midden. Considering that we were beaten at Swindon it did not give us much hopes of confidence. As everyone is aware, away matches are always difficult to win, and especially so against a team of the calibre of the Rovers. They have played exceptionally well all the season despite the fact that, at Tottenham, they were beaten by the 'Spurs by 4 goals to 1, but this was one of those games when all the luck went one way.

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Ideal football weather prevailed at Bristol early on Saturday, and a rattling crowd awaited the arrival of the homesters as well as the sturdy representatives of Strawopolis. And there was more than a ripple of excitement, too, for some dashing play has been witnessed in the past when these teams have faced one another, and, on every occasion some excellent exhibitions of high-class football have been invariably given. What wonder, then, that there was a rousing cheer for the visitors as they appeared—led by "Mac"—on the field this afternoon. Bristolians are nothing if not enthusiastic over football, and, be it

said to their credit, they are by no means tardy in applauding the brilliant tactics and abilities of opponents.

Under the fatherly case of Mr. J. W. Bailey, the teams lined up as follows :—

LUTON.

Thompson

Bennett

McEwen

F. Hawkes

Holdetock

Bob Hawkes

Durrant

Eaton

McKee

Turner

Allsopp

O

Marriott

Smith

Beats

Elmore

Wilson

Gray

Appleby

Tait

Pudan

Dunn

Cartledge.

BRISTOL ROVERS.

The Rovers won the toss, and had a strong wind behind them at the start of the game. But they were held well in check in the initial stages by Bob Hawkes and McEwen, who nullified the efforts of Wilson and Elmore very cleverly. Then the ball, with some very clever work, through Beats, was put out to Smith, and he returned to Wilson who netted, but this was declared to be off-side. The Rovers came again with a rush on the left, but without success, and then the Luton lefts were found to be very smart.

The wind, though, carried the ball out of play twice. On another occasion, when Beats was through McEwen fouled him just outside the penalty line. Appleby took the free-kick admirably, but Thompson cleared well by giving a corner. Then following that, there was a deal of exciting work, but no scoring. This can be explained that, considering the high wind, both teams kept the ball in play admirably, but it must be confessed that the attack was, during the initial half of the game, mainly carried on by the Bristol forwards, who were very "great."

They eventually, however, got their reward with a goal by Wilson, after Beats, Smith, and Elmore had all made unsuccessful attempts right in the goal mouth. From a scrimmage Luton had rather the better of play for some minutes after this reverse, but the Bristol halves held them well in hand, though Turner and Eaton each put in very neat passes. The Bristol backs had but little to do, but indulged in lucky kicks. With the strong wind behind them they repeatedly sent the ball half the length of the field, and the Luton defence was, indeed, hard worked.

Once Marriott slipped past Bennett and put in a great attempt that went wide, whilst just after Smith should have scored, but headed over, this being followed by a brilliant save by Thompson, from Wilson, at the expense of a corner, which was well placed, but McEwen cleared, and play was then taken to mid-field by Luton, who still found the Rovers half-line very hard to beat, Appleby especially shining.

Allsopp on one occasion took the ball well down, and sent it on to Eaton, who gave to Durrant, but he was cleverly robbed by Pudan, and the next minute, when Luton attacked with some vigour again, Cartledge cleared well from McKee.

Another assault by Luton saw a good shot from Eaton, but it was got away by Cartledge, and following that the Rovers went down well in line, Beats finally giving to Smith, who scored with a long shot. Bristol had been all along shooting before they reached the Luton backs, but for a period following this McEwen and Bennett came farther up the field, and the Rovers had to act once more on the defensive.

Allsopp worked very hard to get the better of Dunn, but the big Bristol back put his weight about a lot, and often got the ball more by luck than intent. There could be no two opinions that the Bristol boys were better in using their chances.

Once Wilson scored a lovely goal from Marriott's pass, but the whistle went at the same time for off-side. Beats also missed scoring by a foot. Then Luton stirred, and, led by Durrant, took up the attack in promising style, until Pudan was reached, for he cleared with a big kick that put Gray in possession. He raced in, but his final effort was nipped by Bennett. Two more corners for Bristol failed, and then Luton had hard luck in McKee being given off-side when it seemed a certain score. The interval came with the score standing at

BRISTOL ROVERS	...	...	2
LUTON	...	...	0

Luton started the second half with the novel experience of being two goals down, and, though they now had the wind against them, Bristol were the first to attack, and, but for some clever work by Bob Hawkes, Marriott would at an early stage have scored. Following this Luton attacked hotly, and forced a corner. It was well placed by Allsopp, and Pudan, in clearing, put the ball hard into Holdstock, but when it rebounded into goal, Cartledge caught it and cleared.

Bristol took up the attack again, the whole front line coming down together, and when Wilson centred, McEwen robbed Beats with the ball on his toe, and a big kick sent the ball to the other end of the field, where Allsopp got in a swinging shot, but the ball went outside. Luton then tried some pressure through the right wing, and missed by inches. Pudan looked critical for the Rovers, but Durrant's centre was carried out by the wind.

Another assault by Luton on the left saw Turner head the ball off-side, but the visitors persisted and came again and gave the Bristol defence a very hot time. Dunn and Pudan each kicked with a good length in clearing, and well it was for Bristol they did so, for the home halves were not now playing so well.

Luton forced another corner, but Durrant placed it outside, and the next time, when the same forward got in a fine centre, Pudan cleared in great style. Luton were monopolising the whole of the attack, but were meeting with no luck in front of goal, though repeatedly shooting

Subsequent play was more even, each goal being visited in turn. Smith hit the upright with an open goal, but a few minutes after Wilson obtained a third point for the Rovers, with a capital shot, which Thompson could not possibly save.

The rain now came down in torrents and rendered the ground very heavy. Still the exchanges continued fast, Bristol playing with great confidence while Luton were making strenuous efforts to increase their score. They pressed strongly, and obtained two corners, but they brought no advantage.

The Rovers' defence prevailed during the closing stages, which were exciting.

Allsopp scored a goal for Luton.

Final result:—

BRISTOL ROVERS	...	...	3
LUTON	...	...	1

"Chickaleery" writes in the *Morning Leader*:—
I make no unjust claim when I urge that the Rovers were easily the better side. I have full admiration for the work of the Luton halves, to say nothing of M'Ewen, Bennett, and Thompson behind them in the first half against the wind, but when it came to the foremost ranks the Luton men were good only to the extent of Durrant, whilst all the Bristol five were fine. They set about their work in real earnest, and Wilson, who has been a prolific goal-scorer, quite opened the eyes of the Luton players, who thought no great things of him when he was with Northampton. Smith, too, at inside left, was in brilliant fettle, and once he had excruciatingly bad luck in the second half in not scoring. He beat the back and then Thompson came out. At the right moment Smith shot between his legs, but the wind curled the ball on to the upright of the gaping goal, and Hawkes dropped back and cleared before Smith got in his second endeavour. Thompson's judgment on two occasions was not great, but twice he saved certain goals in the early stages of the first half, when he had to deal with a rush of Rovers and wage with the wind.

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The *Chronicle*:—Southern League football produced nothing of a startling character, for though Luton suffered a bad defeat at Bristol, and for the first time this season lost three goals in a League match, they had already disappeared from the ranks of the favourites. Luton "lived their life" in the first three months of the season. This victory lift the Rovers into second place, and they have an outside chance of getting the championship, for none of the clubs encourages confidence.

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The *Telegraph*:—Unbeaten until the first Saturday in the New Year, and still holding the best record in the competition, despite reported misfortunes subsequently, Luton have at last been brought back to "the field." The championship

seems to have been reduced to a triangular struggle between Luton, Portsmouth, and Southampton, with the bare possibility of Bristol Rovers coming to the front if repeated disasters overtake the teams which at present hold superior records.

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The Sunday Times :—By beating the Bedfordshire Club, Bristol Rovers did a most friendly action on behalf of their two great rivals. Certainly, the Rovers take second place where Portsmouth, who, however, have played three fewer matches, Southampton remain first, and their struggle with Portsmouth is nicely balanced. If Luton win their next match they also must be reckoned with, but until fortune again smiles on them they are left out in the cold. As all these clubs have no longer any interest in the Cup, they can concentrate their efforts on the League fight, which should remain full of interest to the end of the season.

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The Athletic News says :—Allsopp was the most reliable of the losers' front rank. In addition to shooting the only goal, he was always doing useful work. The middlemen made a formidable trio, and the backs were safe. Thompson spoilt his display by twice leaving his charge, and giving one goal away. Carthidge was not so hard pressed as the ex-Bury man, and played his part with his customary skill. The backs tackled better than they kicked, though the brunt of the work in this direction was borne by the half-backs. The forwards gave a clever display. This paper, by the way, had a photograph of Fred Hawkes on Monday.