

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON'S BAD LUCK.

The brilliant sunshine, with just that nipiness in the air betokening the approach of the winter, made Saturday an ideal one for players and spectators alike, and with King Sol in one of his most beneficent moods, the following teams lined out to do battle royal for Southern League points :—

LUTON.

Lindsay

Turner

McEwen

F. Hawkes

White

Pritchard

Eaton

R. Hawkes

Penman

Ross

Barnes

O

Dunkley

Smith

Beats

Lewis

Clark

Jarvie

Appleby

Tait

Wassell

Dunn

Cartledge

BRISTOL ROVERS.

Referee : Mr. P. R. Harrower (London).

Luton won the toss and defended the gas-works end. Beats kicked off and the ball was soon taken down the ground.

A nice run by Barnes was rendered futile by Penman's inability to take advantage. Some fine forward play in the first minute of the game saw several shots into the Bristol Rovers goal. But the finishing touch placed the ball in Cartledge's hands, and danger was averted.

Smith made a good run, but Turner robbed him, and the ball being sent up the field some good play was nullified by Bob being given off-side.

Barnes was playing a good wing game on the left, and was being helped considerably by Ross. The combination was well worth watching. Mac was in fine form and stopped some very awkward runs.

Bob was combining with Eaton on the right, and an ugly trip on Bob saw the resulting free-kick shot well up. A run by Smith was well stopped by Fred Hawkes, and cries of "Well played, Fred" came from the crowd, which at this point was swelling.

Luton at this point were having the best of the exchanges, and some neat foot work by Bob Hawkes received well merited applause.

Ross had hard lines with a shot which went just over the bar. Penman soon after had hard luck with a lively ball, and Wassell had to concede a corner. Luton had some very hard lines, a clinking shot being saved and returned. A perfect bombardment of the Rovers' goal resulted, and some grand work was being put in by the Luton forwards.

Bob had very hard lines in not registering a point, as he was within 3 yards of the goal, but the back intervened and conceded a corner.

Mac relieved the pressure, and the Rovers kicked out. Mac's kicking was particularly clean. Ross made a splendid run, but his final shot was weak.

The Rovers made a grand run, the whole line of forwards making a splendidly combined run. It was a race between the whole forward quintette and the Luton defence, but the ball was sent over the goal.

Quarter of an hour from the start the home team were playing well, and were truly delighting their supporters. Bob's neat foot work gave Ross a good opportunity, but he shot just by the upright. Through some misunderstanding Lewis, well down, had a good chance and shot. The grounder gave Lindsay no earthly chance.

Weakness was apparent as usual in the centre forward position. Eaton had some hard luck. The referee had to talk to Smith for some illegitimate by-play. Evidently the goal had put new heart into the visitors for they played up well.

Out of a melee in which the Rovers were bested, Bob had a long ground shot, but the ball went by the post. It was an object lesson in forward play to see the Rovers travel down the field, and a long shot by Clark was easily saved by Lindsay.

A deliberate piece of handling by Pritchard did not escape the referee's eye, but nothing came from the free kick. The Rovers were showing good form. A foul on Ross resulted in the ball being sent well up, a long shot by Pritchard being cleared. Penman was given off-side. Luton were having the best of the exchanges, and a brisk bombardment of the Bristol goal was relieved, Cartledge giving a corner.

Some midfield play resulted, the pressure being relieved by the ball going out continually. A fine kick by Wassell was returned by Mac. White relieved pressure on the Luton goal by nipping in and helping the ball up the field. The Luton halves were playing a capital game.

A run down by Bristol looked dangerous, but Turner screwed the ball up the field. Eaton centred to Bob, but his kick was weak. After this Bob and Penman changed places. Some good play from Luton caused great cheering, and from a centre by Barnes, Bob had a chance of a lifetime. Cartledge got the ball away very luckily, and the ball was taken at a great pace towards the Luton citadel, but a kick over relieved.

Penman fouled Jarvie, and a run by Barnes ended in the ball being put in the mouth of the goal. How Luton missed scoring was a mystery. The crowd evidently appreciated the work of the home team and only attributed their inability to score to bad luck. Half-time

BRISTOL ROVERS	...	...	...	1
LUTON	...	...	...	0

On resuming the first noticeable feature was a long kick straight across the ground by Penman which came to Barnes, who centred beautifully. There was no one to take the pass and Cartledge cleared easily.

Bristol ran the ball up well, but at last kicked over. Some good play by Ross ended in Penman in an off-side position being stopped by the referee's whistle. Bob tried a long shot, but no result occurred. At this time, after 5 minutes' play, the players were frequently enjoined to "get in."

Much of the forward work of the Luton team proved abortive through Bob's inability to head. The terrace section of the crowd yelled for a corner, but it was not given. Barnes took a corner and with a beautiful curve on the ball Cartledge fisted out, although he was immediately hustled. The ball was taken up the field, Luton's goal was aimed at, but Lindsay was there. Pritchard fully justified his inclusion in the team and worked most energetically.

The crowd several times asked for intrin-

Ross' back there was a shout just as the whistle went. Mac took the kick, but it went outside. The first corner this half fell to Bristol after a quarter of an hour's play, but the ball was too lively to ensure accurate kicking.

One magnificent shot by Beats made Lindsay go at full length, but he stopped the ball and threw out, a fine piece of goalkeeping, which well merited the cheers bestowed on it.

Luton seemed to have the greatest difficulty in getting the ball over the half-way line. Bristol at this stage completely penned Luton in. A good run by Barnes was stopped by Dunn, but the linesman gave the ball out as Barnes recovered and shot in, but to make sure Cartledge cleared.

There was a perceptible improvement in the home quintette, and several shots were rained in but without that goal needed. A splendid run by Bob was well received by the crowd. The decision of the linesman as above, although wrong, should not cause the grand stand section to call out in the terms they did.

A run by Ross resulted in a corner being conceded. From the corner kick Eaton headed on to the bar and the goalie helped it over. Some excitement was caused by the goalkeeper being down on the ground, a back nipped in and cleared when it seemed to us that the ball was through. However, it was not allowed to count. Never have I seen such hard luck experienced by the team, and how the ball was cleared remains a mystery. Several corners fell to Luton and the excitement was intense.

A capital run was made by Clark who managed to get the better of Mac. In succession Luton had 7 corners. When the ball went out the Rovers were not particularly quick at taking the throw in. Ten minutes from the end a beautiful piece of play saw Ross score a magnificent ground goal. The excitement was exceedingly great, and the vociferations of the crowd were delightful to hear.

After this level drawing a decided change was displayed in the throwing in of the Rovers. As one stand spectator characterised it, "Don't they give themselves away?"

The reverse made the players go for all they were worth. A corner fell to Bristol and was put into the midst of the players at the feet of Clark, who made no mistake. It was hard lines as it was only the second corner, and from it Bristol drew ahead. Result:

BRISTOL ROVERS	...	...	...	2
LUTON	...	...	...	1

NOTES ON THE GAME

The following notes on the game are contributed by "Strawopolis":—

McEwen won the toss and after the first few minutes the locals played in such a taking manner that the local supporters looked with encouragement for success.

Early on Pritchard was prominent with a couple of very clever bits of work and they both led up to Cartledge having to save twice, the second shot being a hot 'un. Luton were certainly playing better than I have seen them at any time this season, for the forwards were playing together in a much more confident manner. Once Bob Hawkes was tripped just outside the penalty area, whilst a couple of fruitless corners fell to Luton's share. The shot that led to the second one was decidedly hard lines, for Penman put in a shot that deserved a goal, whilst a little later Bob Hawkes had just as bad luck.

Luton had been doing brilliantly, and had had the hardest of lines three or four times, for Ross missed twice by the merest shaves, and then the crowd were doomed to a great disappointment, for from a breakaway Lewis got a goal for the visitors. It was a fine shot right out of the way of Lindsay, but extremely hard lines for Luton, for on the run of the play the locals were at least two goals the better side, but it is just the luck of football.

On resuming, Luton again commenced the attack, but they could not get the equalising goal. On the other hand, their lucky success had encouraged Bristol, and they played a much better game, the pace of their forwards being most noticeable, whilst they went down together in a line that meant business.

For the visitors, Dunn and Wassall were doing good sound work in defence, and presently they checked an onslaught of Luton, whilst Cartledge was at once called upon to punch away. Another fruitless corner fell to Luton's share and then a short spell of midfield work followed.

Luton were hardly maintaining their early form for Bristol had the ball for a time in the Luton quarters, but they were never close enough to give Lindsay any work, for Mac and Turner were both very safe and the halves were doing sound work. The forwards only wanted just one goal to equalize and raise the hopes of the crowd.

With the hope of changing the luck McEwen altered the composition of the front string, for Bob was placed in the centre, Eaton at inside right, and Penman on the extreme right wing. A foul against Penman looked dangerous, but Fred Hawkes cleared.

A race to the other end saw a melee right in the goal-mouth of Cartledge, and three shots cannoned off one of the defenders and then the ball was got away. It was decidedly lucky, and how Luton did not score will always remain a mystery. Half time soon arrived and the locals were still a goal behind. On the run of the play they ought to have been a goal in front, for they had played a much better game than their opponents and had fully three fourths of the game.

On resuming the second half Luton kicked towards the Gas Works end, and with the hope of seeing the locals equalise the crowd gathered strongly round the bottom goal. The crowd had now reached quite 5,000.

Lindsay was the first to handle a long punt, but at the other end Barnes gave Cartledge a shot that was far more difficult. Directly afterwards the visitors got to the Luton end, and they had a bit of a chance, but Lewis shot high over the bar.

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Luton were soon attacking in earnest and after Penman had got off-side Bob Hawkes put in a shot that Cartledge had to throw away, but generally speaking the ball never came to Bob to give him a fair chance to shoot.

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A run by Barnes and a shot by Ross gained a corner, which Barnes placed beautifully, and the goalkeeper punched away. The ball travelled to the other end, and Mac had a hard tussle with Clark.

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A corner to the Rovers was followed by Lindsay making a brilliant save right on the goal line at full length from a hard drive by Beats. It was a fine shot and finely saved, too.

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A run down by Barnes was checked by the linesman, who gave the ball out of play, although the ball had never crossed the line. It was hard lines for Luton, for Barnes dropped across a lovely centre that might have led up to the equalising goal.

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With a quarter of an hour to go the spectators encouraged Luton with their shouts and the locals put on extra steam. Bob Hawkes made one great effort tricking man after man, but eventually passed the ball just a few inches too far for Ross to get in his shot although the latter was well placed.

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The Rovers were determined to keep their lead and kicked out repeatedly. A corner to Luton was grandly tipped over the bar by Cartledge and then for the next Cartledge made a most sensational score, coupled with it was all the luck in the world. Three other corners fell to Luton, and again these were cleared. Luton were decidedly unlucky, for on the play this half they deserved two goals at least.

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Eventually, amidst the greatest excitement seen on the ground for many seasons, Ross got the equalising goal with a grand shot that gave Cartledge no chance whatever, the ball going into the corner of the net at a terrific pace.

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The luck of the Rovers stuck to them still, for from a corner they scored another goal a few minutes from time through Clark. This was the extent of the scoring, and the Rovers won the game in the luckiest manner possible by two goals to one.