

# The Southern League.

## BRISTOL ROVERS v. LUTON.

Played at Bristol on Saturday. Result:—

Bristol Rovers .....	3 goals.
Luton .....	2 goals.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Lindsay; Turner and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Eaton, Ross, Lamberton, Moody, and Barnes.

Bristol Rovers—Cartledge; Dunn and Pugh; Hales, Appleby, and Jarvie; Wilson, Griffiths, Owens, Smith, and Dunkley.

Referee, Mr. J. B. Brodie (Stafford).

On paper, the task set the local players at Bristol to bring off their first away win appeared an impossible one, but as matters turned out they were nearer doing the trick than in any previous game. What is more tantalising, is that they fully deserved to do so from every point of view. Contrary to early expectations, the usual eleven made the journey, Lamberton having a special "knee truss" fitted during the week which it was hoped would prevent what has now become the usual breakdown during each game. Unfortunately, even this did not keep him from mishap, and in the second half the joint once more gave way, and he was compelled to retire to the dressing-room for attention.

As a result of the two recent cup fights with Pelton Wanderers, the Rovers were four short of their regular eleven, and this gave the visiting players their chance, of which, as will be seen, they took advantage inasmuch as for the first time on this particular pitch, Luton were the superior party.

Right from the commencement the Luton forwards were in evidence, Cartledge early on being called upon by Moody, but the home custodian came out and met the ball just a second in front of Lamberton, who was making for the goal in a very dangerous manner. Fred Hawkes a moment later settled on the ball and made a judicious pass to Ross, who neatly transferred to his partner. Eaton let drive with a cross attempt, which Cartledge saved at the expense of a corner, but this was badly placed.

At the opposite end more luck attended a somewhat similar incident. Hales took a pot-shot which Lindsay saved in a truly marvellous way close to the upright when it looked a certain goal, but in attempting to kick into touch he had the misfortune to see the ball pass over the goal-line near the corner flag. From the resulting corner kick the ball struck the crossbar and rebounded to Smith, who was close in, and the leather was in the net before the Luton defence could realise the danger. It was an extremely lucky point, and was by no means deserved on the run of the game up to this time.

Through a miskick by Fred Hawkes, the home side enjoyed the advantage of still another corner, but this time Lindsay saved, although he had considerable trouble in doing so, Griffiths, who gave the final kick, being in dangerous proximity. But on the whole the play was in the home quarters, and a pot-shot from Ross nearly equalised matters. Cartledge dropped the ball about six yards out of goal with Moody in rather close attendance, but the latter could not get in his kick before Cartledge recovered the ball and threw away.

Barnes brought the ball down in good style many times, and on one occasion it appeared a real opening would result, but the pass came to Moody at rather an awkward angle and he used his hands in order to control it, a manoeuvre which the referee promptly detected. Keeping up the attack, Barnes tried one on his own, and Cartledge, in saving, put the ball to White, whose return shot, however, was a trifle too high.

The crowd did not at all like the look of things and were greatly relieved when they observed Wilson put in a fine grounder which only just missed the goal. It was a well-judged shot, and almost deserved a better fate. This effort was the only dangerous opening engineered by the Rovers for fully twenty minutes. But the relief was only of a temporary nature, and when the game was thirty-five minutes old the equaliser came. Cartlidge was in a measure to blame, for he was tempted out of his goal by the attack, and thus Lamberton had an easy task in converting. Still the Luton centre-forward must be congratulated upon keeping cool and judging the proper moment for letting drive. As half-time came near the Rovers forced a couple of corners, but nothing really exciting came about, both teams having played a hard if not particularly scientific game, and were apparently saving themselves for the concluding half.

Luton, on turning round, had the wind at their backs, and continued to monopolise the attacking work, only possibly a little more so. It was certainly no surprise when, five minutes after the re-start of the second half, Ross, who beat at least two Bristol players, drove the ball on to the under-side of the crossbar, and had the satisfaction of adding to his stock of goals, Cartlidge being beaten all the way.

Naturally, this gave increased confidence to the Luton players, and until midway in the concluding half they kept up a continual attack upon Cartlidge. But the famous goalkeeper of the Rovers was now fully alive to his responsibilities and kept a fine goal. By the way, Luton are the first team to get two goals at Stapleton-road this season. About this time Lamberton's knee gave way, but he was only off about five minutes, although naturally he was not so confident in his play after his return.

As time approached, it was evident the Lutonians were bent on retaining the lead, and for the final twenty minutes devoted themselves mainly to defensive work. It is doubtful if this pays, for it means all the play is near your own goal, and it is very easy for a fluke to bring about a goal. On this occasion such an event did take place, although undoubtedly it was a serious weakness on the part of the referee which led to Luton's misfortune.

During an attack by the home right wing the ball came across to McEwen, who easily got it away, and the game proceeded in the ordinary way. Certainly neither of the three officials signalled anything, but the crowd set up a big shout for a penalty. The referee, who must have seen all that took place, however, shook his head. Still the crowd clamoured, and eventually Mr. Brodie walked across to one linesman, and, to the surprise of the Luton players, pointed to the penalty spot.

Evidently it was the influence of a home crowd that caused him to alter his original idea of the incident, for he was very decided in allowing the game to continue until the shouts of the spectators raised doubt in his mind. As this happened when there was only some five minutes to play, it will be realised how the crowd held their breath while Smith placed the ball, but when it was observed to have found a resting-place behind Lindsay, they went simply frantic.

It was bad enough for Luton to divide the points after playing their best away game of the season, but worse was to follow. Dunckley was tackled right on the touch-line by Turner and went down. At the worst it was a very mild foul, but the referee was prompt in awarding the usual place-kick. Pudan landed it well up and Wilson jumped up from the ruck of players near Lindsay and headed the ball through. Thus was victory literally snatched from the grasp of a luckless team, so far as the present season is concerned.

To hold the possible champions for eighty-five minutes on their own ground deserved something better than a goal defeat, especially as it would have practically saved Luton from the chance of being in the fatal "bottom two." But now it will be a fight almost to the end of the season to escape this humiliation, and although at present at least half a dozen clubs are in a similar position, it is far from pleasant for the officials concerned.

It will be observed that neither goal netted by the winners was a result of combination; indeed, all three came directly from place kicks of one sort or another. On the other hand both Luton's goals came about through legitimate forward work. In every department Luton were seen to advantage, Lindsay having no chance with either goal. Turner has not played a better game while with Luton, and shared the honours with his partner. R. Hawkes delighted the crowd with his clever touches, and White, although far from well, quite held up the substitute for Beale, who was little in evidence

throughout the game. Indeed, the Luton half-back trio were in their old form, and it is known what that means as an influence on the attacking work of the men in front.

In the first half possibly the left wing pair were most dangerous, Barnes getting by his opponents finely several times with the ball. But as the game proceeded Eaton was given more chances to shine, and right well did he act up to them. Lacked, together with Ross, he made Pudan look very small on numerous occasions. It was far the best right wing game seen during the present season, and now this pair have played together they promise to prove as satisfactory as the former combination between Ross and Barnes.

Undoubtedly the attack being very much better balanced, and having two equal wings has brought about the welcome improvement in the forward work. Lamberton, up to the time of his breakdown, was a terrible trouble to Appleby and Co., and notwithstanding the handicap of the medical appliance attached to his knees, was one of the fastest men on the field. He certainly played a fine game, and it is a great misfortune, both for himself and the club, that his knee should have given way at this period of the season.

As for the Rovers, the reconstruction of the forward line was not a happy one, Griffiths and Smith being the only ones to shine, while of the defence, Dunn was by far the most effective, and his judgment had probably more to do with keeping out the worrying Luton forwards than anything else. Cartledge did not appear so safe as usual, but he kept out several teasers, which might have beaten an ordinary goalkeeper. Previous to Saturday only four goals had been scored against the Rovers at home.

There were one or two surprises in the other Southern League games. Fulham, with a reserve team, went to Brighton and secured an easy victory by four goals to one. Tottenham Hotspur were victorious at Northampton by three goals to nil, and at Watford Southampton rubbed it in to the tune of four goals to nil. West Ham United, who played Hilsdon at centre forward—is it the Hilsdon who played for Luton some time ago—beat New Brompton by two goals to nil, and Portsmouth, Reading, and Plymouth accounted for Millwall, Swindon, and Wellingborough respectively.

The following is the League table up to date:

	Plyd.	Wn.	De.	Lt.	Goals,		P.
					For.	Agst.	
Southampton .....	23	14	5	3	40	29	33
Bristol Rovers .....	21	14	4	3	44	21	31
Reading .....	20	14	2	4	41	21	30
Tottenham Hotspur.....	22	9	6	7	25	21	24
Portsmouth .....	20	11	1	8	42	35	23
Plymouth Argyle.....	21	10	3	8	36	27	23
New Brompton.....	23	8	7	8	33	28	23
Northampton.....	20	10	2	8	30	33	21
Queen's Park Rangers...	21	8	5	8	31	30	21
Brighton and Hove.....	21	8	4	9	28	22	20
West Ham United .....	23	7	6	10	29	27	20
Fulham .....	20	7	5	8	28	25	19
Watford .....	18	7	3	8	17	20	17
Brentford .....	21	6	5	10	21	27	17
Luton .....	23	7	3	13	31	42	17
Millwall .....	22	6	4	12	19	35	16
Swindon .....	23	7	2	14	28	44	15
Wellingborough .....	21	4	1	16	16	69	9

One does not often hear of a pluckier player than Lamberton, the Luton centre forward. Time after time his knee goes out of joint, he retires in order to have it coaxed back again into its right place, and then resumes his place, almost as though nothing had happened. Of course, the knowledge that it is liable to go at any moment must make a difference to his play, and we can only imagine what he would have been but for being handicapped in this unfortunate way.

As it is, the rearrangement of the forwards has made a marvellous difference to the team's scoring capacity. In the 14 Southern League games before Lamberton was tried at centre, Luton scored only 11 goals, whereas in the nine games that have been played since, they have placed no fewer than 20 goals to their credit.

Luton having no S.L. engagement for Saturday next, it is probable that Kettering will appear on the Town ground in a friendly. Though the Ketts are no longer in the League, they can render a pretty good account of themselves when occasion serves, as witness their victory over Wellingborough in the English Cup. It is hoped that the match will be well patronised by the supporters, as this month is proving a very expensive one for the Club, there being a lot of money going out and nothing coming in. Mr. Green tells me that he is making arrangements to receive the scores in the Cup-ties on the ground.

The Queen's Park Rangers Committee did a very generous thing over the recent friendly at Luton. The gate receipts were barely sufficient to pay the guarantee, but the cheque for the amount was sent in due course from Luton, and it was a very pleasant surprise for the local directors when they received half the money, less travelling expenses, back again.