

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Yet another match lost. Though few expected that Luton would be successful on their visit to Bristol, at the same time when it became known that several of the Rovers' "lions" were on the injured list, including Beats, Lewis, Tait, and Clark, Luton's prospects were supposed to be considerably improved thereby.

At any rate, Luton sent their full first team, and it was whispered that the selection committee were making a big bid for victory.

The home side were fortunate in winning the spin, inasmuch as they had the advantage of a fairly strong breeze. Naturally the attack opened in Luton's territory. The Rovers' left wing was early in evidence; Dunkley shot over the bar, and Griffiths sent wide in the first minute. Danger was eventually averted, however, and Luton worked their way to the other end. Cartlidge had to run out, and the home custodian just reached the ball before Lamberton got his shot in. The visitors were not easily beaten off, and the forwards, especially Lamberton and Ross, were often shooting, while Barnes on the wing kept putting in some nice centres.

Cartlidge was, however, safe, and all attacks were repelled, ending in the Rovers breaking away, Ovens, their centre-forward, making a grand dash for the visitors' citadel. A corner followed the attack, and from the flag kick Smith scored for Bristol.

Continuing to play up well against the wind, Ross tested Cartlidge with a stinging shot, but the custodian managed to save with one hand. Just now Luton were in fine form, and the dashing play of the left wing in particular was a source of trouble to Dunn, Pudan, the other back, having frequently to come to the assistance of his partner. There was no doubt but the visitors were determined, if possible, to draw level. After a time Lamberton got in a shot which took effect, Cartlidge being away from his charge at the time. Though it was a somewhat lucky goal, on their form Luton deserved to equalise. Nothing more of a tangible character happened up to half-time.

When the interval score reached the Bury Park ground, it inspired hope in the breasts of the spectators assembled there, and the excitement increased.

Taking early advantage of the altered conditions, on resuming, the visitors went away with a dash, and Barnes centred. Nothing, however, came of the attack. Still, our left wing continued to put in some good play, and it was this which in the end enabled Ross to give his side the lead, beating the home goalkeeper with a splendidly judged shot.

Flushed with success, Luton were playing a winning game, and a clever attack led by Bob Hawkes resulted in Eaton forcing a corner. A corner at the other end also proved fruitless. Just at this juncture Lamberton's knee gave away, and hostilities were temporarily suspended whilst the visitors' centre was being carried off the field.

During Lamberton's temporary absence, the Rovers attempted to take advantage of the "ten men"; Ovens tested Lindsay, who saved well, while Griffiths forced a corner. However, the visitors' defence was able to keep their goal intact until Lamberton's return. Luton again attacked in earnest, and a mistake on the part of Dunn nearly brought another downfall of the home goal, but fortunately for him the situation was saved. As time was drawing near, the Rovers took up the attack as if they meant to draw level. This they succeeded in effecting through a penalty being given against Luton, Smith easily converting.

A few more minutes' play and the game would be over, but the time was quite sufficient for Wilson to score the winning goal as the result of a free kick.

On the whole, I cannot help thinking that the home side were very fortunate in snatching a victory. There is one consolation, however—Luton did slightly better at Bristol on Saturday than last season, when they lost to the tune of 3-1. It is a source of regret, nevertheless, that having the game in our own hands and the wind to assist us, we should let the opposing side score two goals in about seven minutes from the close of the game.

Owing to the fact that the three teams below us—Millwall, Swindon, and Wellingborough—all lost on Saturday, Luton's position in the League remains unchanged. In view of the fact that all remaining matches, with the exception of three, are away, we cannot hope to improve our position a great deal this season.