

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

BRISTOL ROVERS v. LUTON.

A REVERSE FOR LUTON.

By losing 3-2 at Bristol, Luton did not do so badly, though many of the Town's supporters are not satisfied with the result; and perhaps there are one or two reasons why that should be so. Even if on the Ivy-road enclosure, the Blues beat the Rovers to the tune of 7-1, that game was a bit of a "fluke," and few expected that Luton would bring a couple of points away with them from the city of the west.

Looking at all the facts, however, Luton ought to have drawn. Bristol were minus Dunn and Cartlidge, two of their strongest players. The visitors, too, had the advantage of winning the toss, which was a great benefit to them, seeing that the wind blew great guns across the ground, almost in a direct line with the goal. True, they were without the services of R. Hawkes, the captain's place being filled by Gallacher, while Brown still stood down for Dobson.

The visitors' centre missed an excellent chance during the first minute of play. Dobson had beaten Pudan, one of the home backs, and had the goal at his mercy, but he was too slow, and Hales, the other back, neatly robbed him of the ball. Luton attacked with spirit, though their shooting was not all that could be desired.

The wind and rain, however, did not deter the Rovers, and for a time they pressed, but both Beats and Clark failed ignominiously, though a shot from Walker just scraped the cross-bar. The Rovers, it would seem, suffered from Luton's drawback—they could attack, but to shoot accurately was a thing they could not do.

A free put Luton once more on the aggressive, Warner making a delightful run on the wing; but subsequent exchanges were weak and erratic, and the home defence had not a difficult task in keeping their goal intact. For the first quarter of an hour play had been very dull and uninteresting, but it suddenly took a turn for the better, as if both teams had "found their legs" at the one and same time.

Platt's charge was seriously menaced for several minutes; shot after shot was sent in by the Bristol men. However, the visiting custodian kept cool, and eventually punched the ball out to his forwards, who, taking advantage of the opportunity, successfully carried the leather into the Rovers' quarters. Barnes lifted the ball over the bar, and Luton were doing everything but scoring. However, the visitors were not to be denied, and another right run on the part of the forwards ended in Pickering scoring a pretty goal.

This was delightful, but, strange to say, the Blues for a time after this appeared to completely fall away, and instead of attacking they were leisurely occupied in keeping the Rovers at bay. Platt safely negotiated a number of shots, though most of them were weak, as the state of the ground was entirely against hard shooting. A free fell to the home side, and from the kick Beats succeeded in equalising. Returning to the attack, the Rovers put on another goal, a high shot from Beats taking effect.

Once more Luton showed some of their old spirit, and they attacked in grand style, but did not succeed in beating their opponents' goal-keeper, who was well shielded by Hales and Pudan. At half-time the score was 2-1 in favour of Bristol, though that was not an accurate indication of the play. The fact was, Luton missed too many chances. At half-time both sides seemed glad of a short respite, the pace during the last 30 minutes having been so fast.

In the second moiety Blackett cleared early from a dangerous run by Clark, and Warner achieved a nice performance by taking the ball, all on his own, close up to the home ci'adel. But the wind was now telling against them, and it must be confessed that Luton's forwards lacked the vigour necessary to success. At the other end the visitors were being attacked, and Beats again beat Platt. The Rovers were now leading by 3-1.

Warner seemed to be Luton's only dangerous man, another run by him bringing relief. In fact it nearly led to a goal, a timely clearance by Jarvis just averting the danger. The ball travelled some distance towards the Luton goal, but White returned it, and after a few exchanges between the Luton forwards and the home defence, Pickering pounced on the ball and scored with a fine shot.

With only one goal dividing them both sides went into the contest with great vigour and determination, and, although the Rovers had the invaluable assistance of the high wind, Luton continued to take a large share in the game. Visits were paid to each goal in turn, but those made by the Rovers seemed more dangerous.

The hot pace began to tell on the Luton forwards, and this, together with the wind, caused them to slacken down considerably. The Rovers were not slow to take advantage of this, and in consequence, Platt and his backs had an anxious time. Two dangerous shots were neatly headed out by McCurdy, and then Platt saved at full length from Beats.

A rush to the other end by Dobson brought Luton a corner, but it led to nothing, and play again settled down in front of Platt. From then to the finish the game was almost a duel between Platt and the Rovers' forward line. The home halves even took a turn at shooting, but Platt was unbeatable. Shots rained in from all quarters, and were nearly all dangerous ones, and but for the super-excellence of the Luton goal-keeper the score would certainly have been of huge dimensions. Occasionally the Luton forwards promised to break through, but their efforts were not sustained, and they were beaten back with little difficulty. The closing minutes consisted of a display of fine shooting by the home forwards, but thanks to Platt Luton escaped with a single goal defeat. The teams were:—

Bristol Rovers: Clarke; Hales and Pudan; Tait, Appleby, and Jarvis; Clark, Lewis, Beats, Walker and Dunkley.

Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; Hawkes, White, and Gallacher; Warner, Macdonald, Dobson, Pickering and Barnes

Result: Bristol 3, Luton 2.

Platt ought to have saved the first goal. He had every chance of doing so, but unfortunately for him, thinking that the whistle had gone for offside, he did not exert himself much to stop the ball. As he afterwards found to his cost, the Bristol man was not given offside at all. But apart from this error, Platt gave an excellent performance. Though Luton did not bring a point back with them, they have nothing to be ashamed of at the result.