

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

A FAST GAME IN THE MUD.

Played at Bristol on Saturday. Result:—

BRISTOL ROVERS		3 GOALS
LUTON		2 GOALS

The teams were as under:—

LUTON.

Platt

Blackett

McCurdy

F. Hawkes

White

Gallacher

Warner Macdonald E. Dobson Pickering Barnes

O

Dunkley Walker Beats Lewis Clark

Jarvie

Appleby

Tait

Pudan

Hales

Clarke

BRISTOL ROVERS

Referee, Mr. H. Ward, Nottingham.

Although with the exception of Plymouth the journey to Bristol is the longest Luton have to make in the Southern League, there is such a fine service of trains from Paddington, it does not take the time of certain others which appear in the face of things much lighter undertakings. It will be seen from the teams set out Luton made two changes from the eleven which proved successful the previous Saturday. Gallacher and Warner returning to the side, Brown being still an absentee, his place as first being entrusted to Dobson once more.

The Rovers were short of Cartlidge and Dunn, but as a team they were extremely keen on revenging that 7—1 defeat at Luton. What would have proved a big gate was, however, quite spoiled by the wretched weather conditions, and not more than 3,000 spectators were present, and most of these were under cover, for except at the goal ends the terraces have been protected from the elements.

McCurdy had the good fortune to win the toss, and the match was started by Beats kicking off against the wind and torrents of rain. Macdonald was the first to get clean away through a bad miss on the part of Pudan, and matters looked promising until Hales by a rush across stopped Luton's inside right before he could get in his final shot.

A rush from the Luton right wing closed by Macdonald trying a long attempt which almost beat Clarke, who just managed to save against the post. At the opposite end Gallacher gave a foul, and the resulting place-kick was eventually punched away by Platt, who ran out quite fifteen yards to get at the ball. Twice after this the Rovers were awarded free-kicks for somewhat slight infringements, but they were not improved upon, although from the second Appleby met a return kick, and only missed by six inches the ball going behind.

Warner settled on the ball near the half-way line, and slipping Pudan he made off in great style. As Hales was closing in Warner was compelled to take his shot from long range, but he almost did the trick. Clarke, however, managed to just touch the ball away, although he fell in making the attempt. Pickering was well up, but he failed to reach in time, or a goal must have resulted as Clarke was lying full length in the mud at the time. Ultimately one of the Rovers succeeded in getting the ball out of danger.

Warner was once more too good for Pudan, but the latter badly fouled him, and from the free-kick Barnes put a grand cross drive which missed the further post by about two feet, with Clarke beaten to the world.

The scene was once more shifted to the opposite end, and Platt was well in the picture with two or three fine saves during a hot attack. The ball was observed to touch White's arm, and loud appeals were set up for a penalty by the crowd, but the referee took not the slightest notice, and Warner and Co. transferred operations to the Rovers' end. The ball was bobbing about in front of Clarke for a moment or so when it came out to Pickering, who was well-placed, and he made no mistake this time and opened the score twenty-two minutes from the start.

Dobson made a dash through, and working over to the right wing he wound up by putting across a fine centre, but Pudan just managed to get this out of danger. Once more the Rovers' forwards brought the ball down, compelling Platt to rush out, and before he could return the ball was shot in, but luckily Blackett had fallen back, and managed to relieve a rather ugly situation by a grand clearance. But Luton were not to enjoy their lead much longer for a free-kick from 30 yards' range was improved upon by Beats, who gave Platt not the slightest chance.

From this point the Rovers' attack was very persistent, and Platt's charge had a warm time. Several corners were conceded without any tangible result, Platt also making a couple of extremely fine saves. Five minutes before the interval Dobson made a fine run down the centre and appeared all over a scorer, but Clarke came out and charged his shot down amid rounds of applause from the spectators. Just when everyone was waiting for the half-time whistle a most extraordinary goal fell to the Rovers. Their left wing came down, and with Blackett tackling Dunkley the latter tried a centre, which was almost over the line midway between the corner flag and the goal, when Walker managed to prevent its going for a goal-kick. He was standing practically on the line when he kicked the ball, and from the Press-box it appeared likely to hit the side net, but the wind just turned it away, and missing the nearest post it travelled across the mouth of goal only to strike the other, and Platt, who had made not the slightest attempt to get at it, had the mortification of picking the ball out of the net. It was sheer luck for Walker could never have dreamed of scoring from the position he was in, but as the game progressed this goal meant a victory for the Rovers, for Luton were always afterwards fighting an uphill battle. Half-time came immediately with the score 2—1 against Luton, rather undeservedly, for they quite deserved to stand level on the play.

Quite early in the second half Barnes put across a fine centre which Warner almost turned to account, but his aim was the merest trifle wide, and the Rovers' goal had a lucky escape. Walker was rather badly fouled by Blackett just outside the penalty area, but Gallacher got the free-kick away in good style. Nine minutes after the restart, however, Beats again found the net, following some good work on the part of Dunkley. It was a shot over the heads of several players from decent range, but Platt appeared to have little chance with the goal.

For some minutes afterwards the Rovers' attack were very busy, Walker especially giving the Luton defenders a deal of trouble to hold, but when this half was some twenty minutes old a grand run and centre by Warner brought about Luton's second goal. As the ball came across Dobson tried to get his head to it but could not quite manage it, although this movement probably took Hales off, and thus allowed Pickering to get in his shot unmolested. Anyway, Pickering beat Clarke for the second time, and the result once more hung in the balance.