

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Owing to the fact that on the day of the fixture, Bristol Rovers were engaged playing the Arsenal in the Cup competition, their match with Luton in the Southern League had to be postponed until Monday. Last October at Bristol the Strawplaiters won by one goal to love; but it was generally admitted that on that occasion the Western City men had had rather hard luck in losing on their own ground. The crowd at Monday's match was a little disappointing, the "gate" being certainly under 1,500. Of course, financially, the small attendance will have no effect upon the local club, as the Rovers will have to make the takings up to the average; but if it were only to give a little encouragement and put more "life" into the game, it is desirable to attract a large crowd.

There was nothing to choose between the sides, so far as strength was concerned. Bristol played their usual team, with the exception of Pudan (the captain), who is on the injured list; while Luton were minus the services of Hogg, the vacancy being filled by Jackson. For the first time for a good while at home, Warner turned out superseding Latheron. At the last moment there was a "re-shuffling" of the visitors' side, and the teams took the field, constituted as follows:—

Luton: Platt; Jackson and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, Gittins, Brown, Fitzpatrick and Barnes.

Bristol Rovers: Cartlidge; Appleby and Hales; Smart, Jarvie, and Hutchinson; Gould, Walker, Owens, Young and Clarke.

Mr. Green, of West Bromwich, had charge of the whistle.

Cartlidge had choice of ends, and he decided to take advantage of a rather strong cross wind. Brown set the leather in motion, and the opening exchanges were pretty even. The Rovers were the first to invade the home territory, but they were easily driven back; and afterwards they seldom got much over the half-way line. The fact was that the Blues were having by far the most of the game, and while Cartlidge was kept busy, Platt, at the other end, must have been shivering with the cold. Though the visitors' forwards were a tidy lot, they found their match in the home halves, who were so ably assisting the backs when threatened with danger. But the local quintette were not sufficiently aggressive to secure any tangible result. True, Barnes, Warner, and Fred Hawkes experienced the proverbial hard luck; but all the same the forwards never looked like goal-getting.

Taken as a whole, the game was not of first-class merit. With the exception of a few spasmodic "flutters," neither side ever rose above a certain level. It was early to be seen that the goal score would be a light one, as neither Luton nor Bristol seemed very anxious to find the net, and rather contented themselves with keeping their own respective lines intact. There was no fear this season of the Rovers being defeated by about seven goals, as was the case on the Ivy-road enclosure last year.

The first half was drawn a blank. However, this did not accurately represent the play, because if Luton had not met with so much misfortune they must certainly have been a goal or so up at the interval. It was Cartlidge who undoubtedly saved his side; but then those who know Cartlidge are well aware of his resourcefulness, and it is only necessary to say that on Monday he kept goal with his customary coolness and fine judgment.

In the second half, play was a little livelier at times, the advantage being certainly again on the side of the homesters. But the Rovers backs had—for Luton—a most inconvenient knack of putting "Sandy" repeatedly offside. The halves stood at nothing, and there were frequent fouls. It was only too apparent that the Westerners, having failed to get through their opponents' lines in the first moiety, were contenting themselves with playing for a draw.

Both sides came close to scoring. Gittins header just over, Warner shot along the cross-bar—a performance which Bristol also accomplished—and generally speaking there was a skirmish all round. For about 30 minutes in the second half, the game had been unproductive. Up to that time the visitors had only been dangerous once, and it must be confessed that Bristol were lucky to come out of the ordeal unscathed, though the packing of their goal saved the situation. Then the Blues raced away, and Warner and the opposing back had a tussle near the corner flag. A minute later, a beautiful centre came across, quite unexpectedly, and Barnes, who was well up, having an open goal before him, made no mistake, and with about 15 minutes to play, Luton were one goal up.

Though the Blues thoroughly deserved to win, on their merits, there were many who considered that Bristol, and particularly Cart-

ledge, had hard luck in being beaten, as it was rather a lucky goal. But it is goals that count, and the suggestion that the Luton left wing man was offside when he shot the goal is scarcely worthy of credence. During the remainder of play, the visitors made one or two attempts to equalise, but holding them well in hand, the locals kept the lead to the end.

Result: Luton 1 goal, Bristol Rovers nil.