

LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Luton 1 goal.

Bristol Rovers nil.

The teams were as follow:—

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

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

Referee, Mr. A. Green (West Bromwich).

So far as the Southern League is concerned, Monday's game was about the duller and most uninteresting played on the Luton ground this season. At the start, there were only a thousand or so spectators, but in the second half there may have been a couple of thousand, and at various times they vainly endeavoured to infuse a little life into the proceedings. It was a Monday game pure and simple, and but for the goal which came about a quarter of an hour from the finish, would have been voted a dead failure.

Luton ought to have been one up in the first minute, for a fine centre by Warner gave Brown a glorious chance, but Sandy headed the ball on to the post. After that the exchanges were for the most part of a desultory character. Luton did the greater part of the aggressive work, but there was such a poor understanding among the forwards that they seldom looked like scoring, and Cartlidge had a fair easy time. Once Warner received a beautiful pass from Gittins and sent across to Barnes, who headed wide.

Later on the outside-left came very near doing the trick with a smart cross shot, but Cartlidge just succeeded in touching the ball out, and Gittins then shot the wrong side of the upright. Shortly before the interval, Gittins and Warner raced away, and the latter placed beautifully. Cartlidge knocked the ball down in front of him just as Brown made a dash, but as luck would have it, the centre-forward missed it by inches only. A moment afterwards Warner centred again, and a bustling time ensued, but the defence prevailed, and half-time arrived with a blank score-sheet.

The second half was productive of few incidents worthy of record. Cartlidge scooped out a shot from Brown, and Gittins had hard luck with a middle from the left wing, placing the ball just wide of the upright. Luton afterwards forced two or three corners without being able to turn them to account, and then the Rovers actually managed to net the ball, but it was fisted through, and moreover the inside forwards were all offside, so that the performance had little of merit about it. After some pressure by the visitors, Luton returned to the attack, and Brown grazed the bar with a header from a centre by Barnes.

Most of the spectators had made up their minds that the game would result in a goalless draw, when there was a bit of fouling going on in the vicinity of the Rovers' goal, and the referee threw the ball up. Luton obtained possession, and a centre being put in from the right wing, Barnes had the satisfaction of scoring.

Having once started, there was some hope that Luton would again be successful, and when Brown, Gittins, and Warner got absolutely clear the hope became a confident expectation, but Gittins, who took the shot, sent the ball across the goal and by the post on the other side. The Rovers became dangerous through a corner given by McCurdy, but nothing happened, Mac and Fred Hawkes effecting a clearance, and the game ended in a win for Luton by 1 goal to nil.

There was little attempt at combination on either side, the Luton forwards being very deficient in this respect. To my mind, the forward play has very much degenerated since Gittins and Fitzpatrick changed places, and if it were not for a sterling defence we should fare very poorly indeed. Fitzpatrick is spoiling himself by indulging in too much circumlocution, but the whole line seems out of joint.

Bob Hawkes was in fine form, but Fred and White were not quite at their best. Jackson, while not being so steady as Hogg, gave a pretty good account of himself, McCurdy was as good as usual, and Platt did the little required of him in excellent style. As to the visitors, they were energetic but not clever.

The refereeing was not quite all that could be desired, and the spectators were not slow to let the whistle-holder know their views on the subject.