

WEDNESDAY'S FOOTBALL.

By "The Goalie."

BRISTOL ROVERS BEATEN.

Luton Town entertained the Bristol Rovers team to a fine beating on Wednesday to the tune of four goals to nil. This puts Luton into safety at the head of the Southern League table for at least a little while to come.

The game was a strenuous one, but it was nearly all in the Blues' hands. As Councillor Dales, of Dunstable, would remark, the visiting forwards were "inept and incapable" in front of the posts; while the Luton lads were so nippy on the ball all over the field that time after time passes were intercepted and players robbed. The difference was strikingly apparent at the opposing goal mouths.

I have had the pleasure of chronicling records the home men have made for every League game they have played this season so far. They registered two new records on Wednesday. For the first time for a year they came through with a clean sheet for the defence; and Luton is the only team in the three Leagues which can boast of having two members who have both done the "hat trick" this season.

Moody captured this honour in the match with Southend; and Stansfield won it on Wednesday in remarkably fine fashion. Not only were all his goals obtained in one half, with no other point scored between them, but all three came within fifteen minutes. Moody we all know as a first-rate marksman, but for Stansfield in the past it has been a not so frequent though now all the more welcome role. "Bob" and the half backs played splendidly. Johnson doing well.

I congratulate the defence on their game. Most of the laurels in this direction fell to Naisby, who played a grand game; but Chapman and Potts, as I have already said recently, are playing in much improved form. Warm congratulations are also due to the forward line, who now hold an average of exactly four goals a match for every game, League and friendly, played this season. The left wing—such are the fortunes of the game—hold 11 of the 15 League goals scored to their credit; but the play of Brown and Quinn has been not less fine. Indeed, to do them more justice than the apparent state of the scoring does, it has been their excellent work and capital passes across from the wing that have let Moody and Stansfield through so often.

Unfortunately, the victory on Wednesday was not too cheaply won; three of the home forwards were hurt during the game. Smith had to be carried off once, but returned in six minutes, only to get a dizzy head knock later in the game. Quinn got his ankle hurt, and his usefulness was impaired for the rest of the game; and Moody also had his shin muscles wrenched. It cannot, however, be said that the Bristol men played an unfair game. On the whole they were straight in this respect, though the home men were conspicuously straighter.

Luton played the same team as on Saturday. "Bob" won the toss, and the visitors kicked off against a slight wind. Splevens early hit the cross-bar with a fast shot, but Naisby tipped the ball over. Three minutes from the start Brown sent the sphere across, Smith shot and hit the bar, the ball rebounded and was again shot and returned and then Moody banged it back into the net. It was in this melee that Smith was hurt, and he was loudly cheered when he returned from the dressing room six minutes later.

During the rest of the first half several corners were obtained by both sides. Naisby was not tested very severely, but made several good saves; and at the other end several shots came near scoring, while "Freddy" Hawkes twice skimmed the cross-bar. The home men were now passing beautifully—a point in which the visitors generally badly failed. A foul kick about 30 yards from goal was placed so neatly by Brown that it bounced over from the cross-bar.

After the interval Peplow nearly got a grounder through the home goal, but Naisby cleared. Soon after Quinn was hurt, as stated above. Stansfield centred neatly, and the goalkeeper rose to the ball, but Smith tackled him and the ball dropped by the goalkeeper into the corner of the net. A few minutes later Smith beat two players and let Stansfield in, the latter scoring beautifully from eight yards out. Quinn had a splendid try from 25 yards out, missing the post by inches.

A corner against the home men was beautifully placed; but Naisby while down on the ground took the ball almost off the foot of one of the Bristol players, and cleared grandly—a remarkably fine save. Now Smith hurt his head in colliding with another player who cut across in front of him. He staggered and fell, but after a while went on playing, though there was no vim left in him. Then Moody was hurt, but also remained to be of use; for a little later he shot towards the goal, and Roney ran out to clear, but Stansfield nipped in, and dribbling the ball past the goalkeeper put it into the net from less than two yards out. The game thus closed with the score standing:—

LUTON 4, BRISTOL ROVERS 0.