

LUTON'S GALLANT VICTORY.

BRISTOL BEATEN BY DETERMINATION.

It was pretty evident right from the start of Saturday's match with Bristol Rovers that the wind would play a large part in the fortunes of the game, and when at half-time Luton, helped by winning the toss, led by 3-1, many of the wise-aces shook their heads and said, "Yes, very good; but wait till Bristol have the wind." Well, we waited, and on the restart Luton soon make tracks for Roney's charge. "A flash in the pan," said the dismal prophets, but minute after minute went by, and Bristol were almost as completely bottled up as in the first half. It was not until the closing stages that they really attacked at any length, but by that time, so well did the Luton defence play, the game was already lost and won. It was sheer determination that won the day, and the Luton players are to be highly congratulated on giving their supporters such a pleasant augury for the holiday matches.

There was hardly a weak spot in the home team's ranks, though Bushell did some rash things at times. The forwards were nippy and clever, with a modicum of dash, and only Roney, a pretty goalkeeper to watch, stood between them and a big score. What a game Stephenson played! What pace and dash, what lovely centres! No wonder the crowd cheered him, and Harvie feared him. Then Brown, too, was great at times, and the inside men were all triers, Streeton having the hardest luck imaginable. "What would Luton do without Fred Hawkes?" exclaimed another occupant of the gold and draughty Press box when that worthy had got Luton out of a tight corner. He saves no end of goals by his wonderful knack of anticipation, and covers up the gap caused by Bob's roving tendencies. The captain was also at his best, and both backs and goalkeeper gave nothing away, playing a particularly plucky game in the second half.

Luton's recent fine form is without doubt due to their adoption of the long passing game, a style of play which brings out the merits of both Brown and Stephenson. Walden is probably responsible in a measure for the change, for he opens out the game in promising fashion, though one might wish he had a little more dash in front of goal. Bristol have a team which may best be described as "useful." It is well-balanced, though slightly stronger in defence. The weakness of the forwards, I should say, is shooting, but they did not get much chance for that on Saturday, for there was no dallying in the methods of Wightman and Potts. Though Bristol were beaten and are in the danger zone, they have a good enough team to escape, for not many teams have scored three goals against them this season.

As soon as the game started it was seen that the puzzling gusty wind was likely to put a premium on good football, but fortunately the players rose above the conditions splendidly. With the breeze in their favour, Luton were soon swarming round Roney, whose charge was threatened by two well placed corners by Brown. Walden tried a couple of likely shots, but Roney had them easily. At this point the Luton forwards were responsible for a really brilliant display of neat passing, but this was capped by an exceptionally fine tackle by Bob Hawkes. Bristol made one or two promising raids, but they rarely got within shooting range. They had a promising opportunity when Wightman fouled Long, but Williams wasted the free kick. The Luton forwards immediately raced to the other end, and Roney sensationally snapped up a pass from Walden to Moody which must have meant a goal.

The first goal was scored after about twenty minutes' play. Harvie fouled Moody in the penalty area, and Wightman, taking the kick, drove the leather along the carpet into the net like lightning. Good work by Bristol's right wing relieved the pressure, but only temporarily, and returning to the attack Luton scored a second goal. Streeton put in a clever centre right from the goal line, and Stephenson shot hard for goal. Roney stopped the ball, but Moody was on the rebound in a flash and scored easily. Within a couple of minutes, Bristol reduced the deficit. Peplow created the opportunity with a timely centre, and Brogan, meeting the ball with his head sent it twisting into the net by aid of the wind. Some tame play followed and then Wightman hit the post with a long deceptive drive, but Walder missed from the rebound. Half-time was quickly approaching, when Stephenson ended some close work by charging Roney over the line with the ball, thus giving Luton a lead of 3-1.

Considering the strong wind blowing against them, Luton did surprisingly well on resuming, and it was a long time before they allowed the visitors to take advantage of the gale. Stephenson was remarkably enterprising at this point, and Harvie had to be always on the alert when he had the ball. Streeton made a couple of futile attempts to get through on his own, and from a corner taken by Brown, Moody just missed the upright. During the first quarter of an hour, the Rovers only attacked once, and several times the visitors were quite outmanœuvred by Luton's brilliant combination. Roney played very soundly, however, and eventually the swing of the pendulum saw Bristol attacking, their halves passing very accurately. It was at this point more than any other that the Luton backs shone, and although they indulged in a great deal of kicking out, it was pardonable under the circumstances. Bristol played desperately as time approached, but they could not break down Luton's defence, and time came with the score:—

LUTON 3, BRISTOL 1.