

# Southern League.

## LUTON v. BRISTOL ROVERS.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

|                      |          |
|----------------------|----------|
| Luton .....          | 3 goals. |
| Bristol Rovers ..... | 1 goal.  |

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Naisby; Wightman and Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Streeton, Walden, Moody, and Stephenson.

Bristol Rovers—Roney; Harvie and Bennett; Morris, Shaw, and Williams; Pepiow, W. Hurley, Jones, Brogan, and Long.

Referee, Mr. C. W. Gillett (Willesden).

Bob Hawkes is not generally regarded as being particularly lucky with the spin of the coin, but he succeeded on Saturday, and his success in this matter very likely had a lot to do with the winning of the game. For there was a strong wind blowing, and the advantage of this in the first half meant a good deal. There were only about four thousand spectators, the smallest gate for any fine Saturday this season. Probably this was due in a large measure to the absence of railway facilities, there consequently being very few outsiders present.

It will be seen that Stephenson again appeared at outside-left in the Luton team, and Streeton was given the preference at inside-right over Walker. This was rather a bold step to take, and judging on previous performances at home was hardly justified, but it may be said at once that Streeton played a capital game all through, and though not carrying much weight, he was certainly very smart.

From the way in which Luton began, it did not seem that they were likely to avail themselves of the advantage of the breeze, for though they were constantly in the vicinity of the visitors' goal, they seldom looked like scoring. Luckily, the ice was broken by a penalty kick. There should have been one given earlier in the game against the Rovers, but apparently the referees did not see the offence, though it was quite as palpable as the one which was penalised. When the whistle-holder pointed to what is called the fatal spot, Wightman was brought up to take the kick, and he scored with one of the best drives I have seen. The ball went in like a flash of lightning, and right along the ground.

After that, Luton did much better, and though the Rovers managed to get a goal, Luton were full value for their two-goals' lead at the interval. The question was whether they would be able to maintain it against the wind. Any anxiety on that account was soon dispelled, however, for Luton quite overplayed their opponents in the first twenty minutes of the second half, and during that time Naisby never had to make a single save. Subsequently the Rovers showed to greater advantage, but they were not able to reduce Luton's lead.

Now to go back to the beginning. As already

stated, the Luton captain did remarkably well to win the toss, and the home team were early on the aggressive. Moody had hard luck in a race for the ball with the goalkeeper, the latter just clearing in the nick of time. For some minutes the Luton men continued to harass the opposing backs, forcing corner after corner, not one of which could they turn to account. The Bristol men, what with the wind and the excellent work of Wightman and Potts at back, rarely troubled Naisby, whereas Roney had a considerable amount of work to do.

After about fifteen minutes' play, Luton were leading. In a smart attack on the visitors' goal, Moody was pushed by Harvie in the penalty area, and the referee promptly awarded Luton the kick. Roney, although making a great attempt to save Wightman's shot, had no possible chance with the kick. This success had the effect of brightening up the Luton attack, and Bushell came very near doing the trick with a magnificent drop shot, Roney saving with difficulty just under the bar. It was but a few minutes afterwards that Streeton put in a really brilliant piece of work, which led to the scoring of Luton's second goal. He obtained possession near the half-way line, and, working out towards the wing, beat the half-back and back and sent in a beautiful centre, Stephenson headed in very swiftly, and though Roney saved, he could not clear, the result being that Moody scored easily.

After this second reverse the Bristol men had more of the game, and, as the result of a well combined effort, Brogan scored with a beautiful header. The goal came from a breakaway, in which Hurley appeared to be offside, and Peplow receiving the ball, sent it across to Brogan, who headed through. Then the Luton men took the game in hand again, and pressed persistently right up to the interval, though they only scored one more goal. This was a rather amusing one in some respects. The Luton forwards were all round the visitors' goal, and a melee ensued which was ended by Stephenson dashing in and charging the goalkeeper and ball into the net together. At the interval Luton were leading by three goals to one.

Upon resuming, Luton, despite the fact that they had the wind against them, attacked the Bristol goal right vigorously, and Moody only just missed with a good shot in almost the first minute. Then Brown came along on the wing and forced a corner, which, however, was not turned to account. A few minutes later Brown was injured in going to head the ball just as the left half-back was about to kick, with the result that Brown had a nasty kick on the face. Everyone thought that the Luton winger was seriously injured, but happily, after being treated by Trainer Lawson, he was able to resume. Indeed, as soon as the ball was thrown down, he was "up and at it," and he sent in a beautiful centre, from which Stephenson got in a remarkably good shot, the ball only just missing the post. It was not long afterwards that another stoppage was occasioned through injury—this time to Fred Hawkes, who hurt his knee, but after the services of the trainer had again been requisitioned, Fred was able to get to work again.

For quite twenty-five minutes Luton had the better of the exchanges, and on several occasions the Bristol goal had some very narrow escapes.

In the attacks on the visitors' citadel, Streehon and Stephenson were the shining lights, both players several times having hard luck in not scoring.

Towards the close, however, the Bristol forwards improved greatly, and the Luton backs and Naisby were given a very warm time for the last quarter of an hour. Naisby, however, played well, and brought off some clever saves, from shots by Brogan and Peplow in particular. Praise must also be given to the excellent work of Wightman and Potts in the last fifteen minutes. They played splendidly, and the visitors were prevented from scoring, with the result that the game was decided upon the goals scored in the first half of the match.

It was delightful to see Bob Hawkes at his best again. He played a wonderfully clever game, taking the ball from his opponents with consummate skill and placing beautifully at the feet of his forwards. Bushell and Fred also did excellent work, whilst, as just stated, the backs were in great form. Stephenson, perhaps, was the most conspicuous of the forwards, his speed in carrying the ball down the field often enabling him to shake off the opposition. Streehon also put in a lot of good work, whilst Moody and Brown were up to their usual standard. Warden was useful, though certainly not brilliant. He kept the game open, however, and that was a strong point in his favour.

With regard to the Rovers, perhaps Roney was the most prominent man in the team, and he kept goal remarkably well. The backs also gave a good account of themselves, and Long was the smartest of a fairly good line of forwards. The outside-left proved himself to be a very capable man.

Of the other games in which Luton were interested, the most surprising result, perhaps, was that at Leyton, where New Brompton were victorious by 2 goals to nil. It was fully expected that Leyton, on their own ground, would be good enough to beat New Brompton, or at any rate make a draw. Plymouth were rather fancied to win at Southampton, but the Saints managed to get a goal in the first two minutes, and though the Pilgrims subsequently had the better of the play, especially in the second half, they could not score.

Exeter City succeeded in drawing at Coventry, and Brentford did the same at Stoke, the scores being one all, so that Luton will need to do well during the holidays to make their position safe. The following is the League table:—

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|                      | P  | W  | L  | D  | Goals |    | PTS |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|----|-----|
|                      |    |    |    |    | F     | A  |     |
| Queen's Park Rangers | 32 | 19 | 6  | 7  | 55    | 33 | 45  |
| Plymouth Argyle      | 32 | 18 | 8  | 6  | 54    | 27 | 42  |
| Swindon              | 29 | 19 | 7  | 3  | 71    | 25 | 41  |
| Northampton          | 30 | 17 | 7  | 6  | 63    | 35 | 40  |
| Coventry City        | 32 | 16 | 11 | 5  | 60    | 46 | 37  |
| Millwall             | 32 | 13 | 9  | 10 | 55    | 42 | 36  |
| Brighton and Hove    | 30 | 14 | 9  | 7  | 61    | 31 | 35  |
| Watford              | 31 | 12 | 9  | 10 | 41    | 34 | 34  |
| Crystal Palace       | 31 | 12 | 11 | 8  | 59    | 38 | 32  |
| Reading              | 30 | 10 | 9  | 11 | 32    | 38 | 31  |
| Norwich City         | 32 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 35    | 46 | 31  |
| West Ham             | 31 | 12 | 13 | 5  | 36    | 35 | 29  |
| Stoke                | 32 | 10 | 13 | 9  | 34    | 53 | 29  |
| Bristol Rovers       | 31 | 8  | 14 | 9  | 25    | 62 | 25  |
| Exeter City          | 32 | 8  | 15 | 9  | 41    | 56 | 25  |
| Luton                | 32 | 7  | 15 | 10 | 41    | 53 | 24  |
| Brentford            | 31 | 8  | 15 | 8  | 47    | 60 | 24  |
| Southampton          | 31 | 8  | 15 | 8  | 38    | 54 | 24  |
| New Brompton         | 31 | 6  | 17 | 8  | 15    | 67 | 20  |
| Leyton               | 31 | 5  | 18 | 8  | 22    | 53 | 18  |