

A LUCKY GOAL.

GIVES BRISTOL CITY VICTORY OVER LUTON.

(By 'CRUSADER'.)

Bristol City deserved their victory over the Town on the balance of play, but they were extremely fortunate to get it, because the only goal of the game came when it was least expected, and in a manner that was not due so much to faulty play as to sheer accident. It may be argued that in well-ordered defence accident is avoided, but that is a point for contention. Nothing but praise could be given to the Town defenders for their magnificent resistance. Those who saw the game at Luton the week previous will agree that the City forwards played brilliant football, and in spite of the opinion of the Bristol supporters that the City were not doing as well as usual, there did not appear to be very much amiss with them. The difference was due to a very considerable improvement in the Town's play fore and aft compared with their game the week before, and had this been maintained for the full course of 90 minutes we might have brought away at least a point, for, while the Town defenders showed full ability to frustrate the opposition, the City-defenders never seemed sure of themselves, and could not cope with the Town's nippiness, and it was just as likely that the Town would score as the City.

The City went off with a bang, and delighted the crowd by smashing the ball at goal half a dozen times in the first two minutes. It was then we found the Town on their mettle, and Gibbon let them know that he would not be beaten while he had a chance of getting anywhere near the ball. It was a few minutes before the Town halves and forwards got into play, and then they, too, made things hum, and Hoar surprised the crowd by the ease with which he outwitted Dyer. There was a delightful snap about the work of the inside men, too, and so we settled down to a rattling exhibition, in which the ball travelled quickly from end to end, and thrill at one end was followed by throb at the other. Certainly, Bristol better brought out the abilities of Gibbon, but Vallis was extremely lucky on several occasions, and for two onslaughts the City goal had to be packed to keep the Town forwards from bursting through. And this state of affairs continued right to the change-over, and we had to acknowledge then that Billy Moynoux's statement before the game that he would not sell his "bonus" for a dollar, was quite justified.

It was afterwards that the City showed up better, and the game was neither so good nor so clean as in the first half. The worst offenders in this latter respect were the City's three inside forwards, who displayed utter recklessness against the Town half-backs, and at one time or another all the latter, as well as Butcher and Tirrell, were crippled, and the only construction that could be put upon this unhappy diversion was that the City's forwards were piqued to discover more virility and stubbornness on the part of their opponents than they expected.

When the goal did come the crowd, which had showed a very fine sporting spirit, were very sympathetic towards the Town defence, greatly pleased though they were about the goal. Pocock, who had done many fine things, centred right across goal, but with Gibbon on the alert and ready for the ball, which he would have had ample time to take, we had no fear of a goal, but Jim Walker dashed past Fairclough and "legged" the ball outwards, apparently to divert the ball from the home centre-forward, but FAIRCLOUGH was close behind Walker, dead in front of goal, and rapped it into the net, Gibbon just failing to reach the ball with his hand. There were more severe onslaughts afterwards, for the City were greatly encouraged, but there was no further score, thanks to great work by Gibbon and his backs.

It is many a long day since such a fine display has been given by a Luton goalkeeper, for if there have been more shots put in, there has never been a game in which a goalkeeper was called upon to face so many severe tests. Even when the game was fairly even the City did not send many shots wide of the target, but Gibbon's

greatest feats came in the wonderful dives he made to take the ball from the feet of opponents on the point of shooting at close quarters. Nothing came amiss to him, except that one shot, and against that he might just as well have been in Luton as at Bristol. Everybody praised him most highly, and not one word too much can be said in that spirit.

Lennon was better than he has been during the last month, and although he again had many duels with the clever Pocock, he positioned so well that he got rid of many dangerous attacks, and his kicking was never at fault. Tirrell again played a great game, and his kicking from all sorts of positions was accurate and strong, and his head saved much boot leather. The halves rose to the occasion splendidly before the interval, and quite surprised the crowd as well as the Bristol forwards by their tenacity and pace. Molyneux's return was a success, and he was a keen factor in attack as well as defence before he got two nasty cracks that necessitated Billy Lawson's attention. Walker showed welcome improvement on the previous week, and in the first half he used the ball to better purpose than usual, although he got in the wars with Fairclough soon after the game was started. Jennings played better than ever, and he prevented Baird Walker showing anything like the cleverness we saw at Luton.

During the first half the forwards put a lot more skill into their work than we have seen for a long time. The introduction of Irvine made for improvement in the inside positions so far as combination was concerned, although there was no better shooting. Whatever the construction of the line in the future, he showed skill enough to suggest that he should be persevered with, and if he will leave the halves to do their own work and will not overlook his winger he will be a success. Butcher was not quite so good as at inside-left, perhaps, but his keenness and skill were always a harassing factor, and twice he broke clean through and would have scored could he have pushed the ball harder. Thompson put in some pretty touches in the first half, and led many raids, but got none too much afterwards. Hoar was the vital element in the early attacks, but he seldom got a show after the first half-hour, although he invariably walked round Dyer when he got an even chance. Reader's best work came in the closing stages, when he made several attempts to equalise, and one shot that dropped just under the bar gave Vallis an anxious moment.

The City defenders were none too sound under pressure, with Banfield the best. Torrance was the best half-back, and in a clever forward line Pocock was the outstanding figure.

The crowd numbered nearly 15,000, and the game was played under ideal conditions.