

LUTON'S LUCK OUT

Town Captain Injured at Bristol.

Plucky Fight Against Odds.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Owing to the grave doubt as to whether the game would be played, I did not go to Bristol on Saturday to see Luton Town tackle Bristol City. The persistent fog compelled the Town directors to cancel all the arrangements on Friday and make a new schedule, with the result that the Town team journeyed to London on Friday night—after waiting on the wretched station at Luton for well over an hour. On Saturday morning they went on to Bristol, and, as things turned out, they could have stuck to the original plan with more comfort. A fair and comprehensive report is given in notes from a capable Bristol writer.

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There was one important change in the team, this being the inclusion of Love at centre-forward, the directors being induced to make this, not through dissatisfaction with the progress made by young Littlewood, but rather to find out the actual possibilities of the energetic little Scot, who had done so much to ginger up the Reserves' play during the month he had been with them. Another change was the return of Jim Thompson, and he figured at inside-left for the first time, while in the back division Till and Graham exchanged places.

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The City had one change, for they introduced a new forward in Keating, transferred from Newcastle United during the week at a big fee—stated to be £1,000. For Newcastle United Reserves last season he scored 41 goals in 42 games, and before his transfer to Bristol City he had scored 8 goals in 9 games. It was confidently expected that he would strengthen the City's attack. He was given a cordial reception, as were Luton Town when they turned out on a ground upon which 60 tons of sand had been scattered to neutralise the effect of the severe frost. There were 9,000 spectators when Jennings won the toss.

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This was the only bit of good fortune Jennings had during the afternoon, for after the game had been in progress seven or eight minutes, and had revealed the Town in a favourable light, the Town captain met with an accident so serious that he is not likely to appear on the playing field again for many weeks—variously estimated at two to three months. He had held up a City advance and sent the ball out to the wing, and the Town forwards had made an attack before they were aware that he was down. He was removed to the dressing-room, and Trainer Barr and a doctor attended him, and he was unable to take further part in the game, much though he pleaded to be allowed to do so.

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Dennis fell back to centre-half, and the attack was thus robbed of an important factor. Under these circumstances it was not a matter of wonder that the City had the better of the game. Nevertheless, the Town put up a strenuous defence, and the players were confident and unanimous on two things: that if Jennings had not been hurt they would not have lost; that two of the goals were offside and another never crossed the line. Their protests were unavailing, however, and they lost by 5-1.

For nearly half an hour after Jennings' retirement the Town defended successfully, and then Kirk got across a centre that KEATING headed into the net. The Town made a valiant response, but were beaten back, and Keating slipped the ball through for POCOCK to score with a fast low shot. These were the only goals in a first half in which the Town, considering their severe handicap, had quite a good share of the play, and often had the home defence in serious difficulty. Love and Thompson were prominent with individual efforts, and the right wing showed nice bits of combination at times.

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Ten minutes after the restart the City were credited with another goal. KEATING shot hard, and the ball struck the bar and came out for Purdy to clear, but the referee awarded a goal, much to the dismay of the Town defence. Still the team never lost heart, but kept plugging away, and many hot raids were made upon the City goal. Once Davies saved the home goal when Vallis had made a great save but had lost his position.

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Then the best goal of the game was credited to the Town. Thompson made a sparkling run and finished with a perfect centre for MILLER to turn the ball into the net at close quarters. The City then had a turn again and WALSH scored. The Town players yelled "offside" and drew attention to the City centre-forward's position before he shot, but the referee was adamant, and the goal counted. This took a lot of heart out of the Town players, and just before the end POCOCK scored again, another appeal for offside meeting the official's deaf ear.

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The "Western Daily Press" says:—"Luton battled on a man short. Indeed they deserve full credit for a plucky and persistent show under this handicap, and more than once they earned the liberal applause of the crowd for lively, dangerous raids upon the charge of Vallis. The game was not by any means a great one. True, it never fell to sheer drabness, but it was patchy and of no sustained merit. Partly, no doubt, this was due to the bone-hard frost-bound state of the pitch—a condition that made the referee dubious before the start as to whether it was fit to play on. The ball came off this iron-hard surface at queer angles and at fiery pace."

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The "Times and Echo" says:—"It says much for the stickativeness of the visiting defence that they kept the City out for another 20 minutes, and in the last hour of the game there were many spasms of play in which the Luton defence undeniably shone, in spite of the fact that it was five times penetrated."

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The "Sports News" says:—"Luton made a very plucky and very creditable fight of it with ten men, even if they were not over ceremonious in all their methods."

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Most of the critics have a good word for Love, in whose debut we were chiefly interested, and Purdy gave a fine display of goalkeeping, while Thompson was as enthusiastic as ever.

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BRISTOL CITY	5
LUTON TOWN	1

BRISTOL CITY.—Vallis; Hughes, Glenn; Neesam, Davis, Torrance; Gillispy, Keating, Walsh, Pocock, Kirk.

LUTON.—Purdy; Graham, Till; Richards, Jennings, Millar; Miller, Shankly, Love, Thompson, Dennis.

Referee.—A. W. Lamacroft, Exeter.