

TEAM SPIRIT WINS.

Luton Town's Grand Start at Bristol.

ROVERS RECEIVE RUDE REVERSE : THOMPSON'S BRACE.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 2
BRISTOL ROVERS 1

BRISTOL ROVERS.—Whatley; Bennett, Haydon; Rowley, Forbes, Smith; Barrett, Williams, Whatmore, Holcroft, Evans.

LUTON TOWN.—Mingay; Graham, Till; Richards, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Dennis.

Referee.—W. E. Russell, Swindon.

For the first time since the war, Luton Town began their campaign with a victory on opponents' ground. It must be obvious to anyone considering the conditions intelligently, that the football was not perfect. The heat was terrific, and seemed to grow worse as the afternoon advanced; the ground was adamant, and while appearing nice and green from the terraces, was not so good as it looked. There were several awkward holes made, apparently by the horse that had drawn the roller when the ground was soft, and the turf was weed rather than grass, and I venture to think that very soon the centre of the ground will be bare. The light ball was difficult to control, and then the pace at which the Rovers commenced soon made clear the fact that the issue depended upon stamina as much as skill.

In the first half-hour the crowd, which looked big enough for an estimate of 15,000, had

VISIONS OF THE VICTORY

that had been predicted quite freely. Their new men, especially Forbes at centre-half, played well, and the combination was often clever, the speed and general method of attack strong and forceful. The Town took up the challenge spiritedly, and made many raids, but in the main they were defending for half an hour, and in this period the defenders proved their mettle. They had established equality before the first goal came, and were doing quite as much attacking as the Rovers when the misfortune befell.

It was just one of those little incidents where a little more care would have averted danger, and yet one finds the apportionment of fault very difficult.

Barrett swung across what was meant to be a centre, but the ball swerved into goal. Mingay and Graham were well on the spot, and very close to each other when the goalkeeper caught the ball, and there appeared to be no danger, but WHATMORE was close up to, and before Graham could nudge him away he had

HUSTLED MINGAY.

and the ball slipped from the grasp of the custodian and gently rolled just inside the post. It was certainly a lucky goal, but it served to whet the appetites of the spectators, and they asked for more.

They got no more, and for the rest of the game the Town had three parts of the attack. They swarmed round the Rovers' goal, and a little more steadiness would have brought the equaliser earlier. Pointon, Dennis, and Millar each got over nice passes, and Norman Thomson was spreading dismay every time he got the ball. It was left to a neat move by Richards to initiate the levelling of the score. He dispossessed Holcroft in a tussle, made a little ground, and as Smith dashed across, to meet the expected pass to Pointon, Richards slipped the ball between him and Haydon to JIM THOMPSON. The centre-forward took it in his stride, made ground rapidly, and just as Bennett arrived on the scene a splendid shot was driven right away from Whatley to the farther end of the goal; the ball just touched the post and swirled all round the bottom of the net. It was

A VERY FINE GOAL.

and ere the players had lined up the whistle signalled the interval.

ROVERS 1
TOWN 1

The Town players were very confident when I saw them in the dressing-room at half-time. They felt they had the full measure of their opponents, and were

CAPABLE OF WINNING.

Their play on the resumption justified their confidence. There was a brief skirmish by the Rovers, and then the ball came into the Rovers' half, and except for occasional spasms the Rovers were tied down to defence. The lengthy Forbes was powerless to hold the Town inside forwards, and Norman Thomson bamboozled him time after time, while the backs were almost panic-stricken by the disconcerting dashes of Jim Thompson. Pointon got much more work than Dennis, and swung the ball accurately into the middle in a way that drove Haydon and Bennett almost frantic. Whatley alone seemed to retain his coolness, and the fact that the Rovers' backs were glad to kick the ball over the stand or for corners, shows the straits to which they had drifted. Their halves were too busy defending to help the forwards, and so we had Graham and Till frequently on the middle line dropping the ball among the forwards. The Rovers' backs and halves resorted to improper tactics to gain momentary relief, but Whatley was constantly on the alert and often engaged.

THE DOWNFALL

came, however, when least expected. The Rovers' forwards gave the defence a breathing space, and then the ball came up the right and another attack by the Town was beaten off. Richards took possession of a loose ball near the touchline, and again Smith expected a pass to Pointon, but the ball was dropped just inside the penalty-area. Haydon and JIM THOMPSON went for it, and the Town centre-forward secured, skipped over Haydon's leg, and as Whatley came out sent the ball past him into the net. No quite so spectacular as his first goal, perhaps, but it was a tribute to his watchfulness and his courage, for he might well have been excused losing the ball to Haydon.

The play of the Town was meeting with warm approval, and the crowd were comparing the merits of the teams in terms derogatory to their favourites. Whatley, even, did not escape criticism, though he also won cheers by two or three saves, and the referee was exhorted to

"PLAY THE GAME!"

when the Town players were pulled up for off-side two or three times. When George Dennis was hurt Rowley was to blame. He had been the worst offender, and it was an ugly jab that brought down Dennis and caused his removal from the field owing to a badly damaged ankle.

With ten men the Town maintained the upper hand, and although desperate efforts were made by the Rovers in the closing stages, Mingay was not seriously troubled, and the Town finished stronger and fresher, and not one was flying the distress signal.

It was the team spirit that won. Every man was out for the side. One might show flaws

here and there, but apart from the goal scored against them, the defenders were right on top of their job. Close-up chances to the Rovers were few and far between, indeed, there was not one easy opening, and while Mingay covered the ball well, Graham and Till played magnificently. What I most liked about their play, and it is

AN UNDOUBTED IMPROVEMENT.

was the way the ball was cleared. There was no ticking about near goal. Graham can seldom have played better. His duels with Evans, the brilliant winger the Rovers have obtained from Cardiff City, were always thrilling, and Graham never failed when he had an even chance. Till's cool, clever work won meed of praise similar to his last visit to the ground. Of the middle men I am bound to say that they did not start well as a line. Not one got into his stride immediately, but they kept heads and hearts up, and had established mastery before the interval. Richards and Millar were very prominent in supporting their attack, and Rennie's clever kicking often came into use at critical moments for the defence. The young centre-half did not swing the ball out to the wings quite so well as he usually does, perhaps, but he was a watchdog on Whatmore, and what was most pleasing, he finished as strongly as any player.

If I say that Norman Thomson was

THE CLEVEREST FORWARD

on view I am not exaggerating in the least. It was not always what he actually did, but what he led the other man to believe was going to happen that counted. Some of the Town players were commenting upon his feinting, and Forbes, a brainy pivot, never knew what the Town player was going to do with the ball. Hence, in the second half he got rattled, and when he fouled Thomson he was mildly reproved by the referee. Both Jim Thompson and Pointon benefited by the sallies of the inside-right. Pointon was a trifle too deliberate at times, and once he should have taken a chance himself, but he preferred to ladle out opportunities for his colleagues, and that is the function of a winger. On the other flank Agnew worked as mightily as ever, was always harassing the opposition, and although he and Dennis did not get the ball so often as the right wing, they made good use of it. Both had hard lines in not opening an account, and it was a great pity that Dennis should be injured so soon.

Individual skill, however, must come second in summing up; it was

THE WHOLE TEAM SPIRIT

that enabled the Town to make this grand start.

Of the Rovers, Whatley still shows that he is the finest goalkeeper the Rovers have had. I know of none better in the South. His backs were inclined to be turbulent, but were fearless and kicked strongly. Forbes was the man of the side for half an hour, and fulfilled Mingay's prediction made before the game, that he would not last against the Town's inside forwards. Smith was a good worker, but Rowley would have been better had he been less provocative. Evans was the outstanding forward with Barrett next best.

Apart from one or two offside decisions, Mr. Russell controlled the game well.

GREAT START BY LUTON TOWN.

FOUR VICTORIES.

Both Teams Succeed Home and Away.

(By "CRUSADER").

At Bristol on Saturday.—

LUTON TOWN 2
BRISTOL ROVERS 1
BRISTOL ROVERS.—Whitley; Bennett, Haydon; Rowley, Forbes, Smith; Barrett, Williams, Whatmore, Holcroft, Evans.
LUTON TOWN.—Mingay; Graham, Till; Richards, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Dennis.
Referee: W. E. Russell, Swindon.

Scorers.—

For Luton: Jas. Thompson.

For Bristol: Whatmore.

At Luton on Monday.

LUTON TOWN 2
BRENTFORD 1
LUTON.—Mingay; Graham, Till; Richards, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Clark.

BRENTFORD.—Ferguson; Donnelly, Winship; Hodnett, Rae, Bellamy; Craddock, Lane, Watkins, Dearn, Berry.

Referee: Mr. P. A. Lipsey, Maldstone.

Scorers.—

For Luton: Millar and Norman Thomson.

For Brentford: Dearn.

Searching into records, a long way would be necessary to find a happier beginning of a season than that of Luton Town in the closing days of August. It cannot be denied that the second game discovered a few dismal "Joannies" among the supporters. Perhaps they had some little justification for pessimism during a period of the game, but it should not be forgotten that there is, or should be, year by year, less and less gap between the classes into which football clubs are divided, and at this time every club has more or less definite visions of promotion, or, at least, of doing well. At the beginning, no club thinks of relegation: all eyes are on pride of place.

It was so at Bristol on Saturday. The idea in the Western City was that, for once in a while, the Rovers were likely to prove a better side than the City, and

TALK OF PROMOTION

was fairly free and easy. We, too, have suffered disillusionment in our time. After seeing ninety minutes of hard and earnest play under a tropical sun, the Rovers' supporters had revised their views considerably, and were fain to admit that at least one club was more likely than the Rovers to move into Division II. next May.

The game was exciting for the greater part of the time, but the pace was such that one or other team had to crack up, and it was the Rovers. They got a fortunate goal in the first half following a long spell of pressure, in which our backs and Mingay were overworked. More dangerous situations had been erased, and none expected a goal, but it came and filled—or made a start towards filling—

THE ROVERS' CUP OF JOY.

Barrett, a nippy winger whom Millar found too elusive at times, swung in a shot-centre, which Mingay caught neatly enough. Graham was close beside him, and the goalkeeper apparently expected the ball to keep at bay the rushing Whatmore, but between them the worst happened. WHATMORE caught Mingay on the hip, the ball was dislodged from the goalkeeper's grasp, and before he could recover, it had trickled over the line just inside the upright.

If this cheered the Rovers it certainly gave a flip to the Town, and from that point they never looked back. The equaliser came from a fine effort by JAS. THOMPSON, who took a pass from Richards, slipped the backs, and netted with a fine shot that glanced off the post, Whatley having no chance.

In the second half, Luton

PRESSED FIERCELY

for most of the first half-hour, and Whatley's goal had many narrow escapes, and he saved the citadel time after time. At the end of fifteen minutes there was another nice pass into the goal-mouth by Richards, and again JAS. THOMPSON seized on the ball, slipped between the backs and sent the ball past Whatley.

That was the end of the scoring. The Rovers had a few turns, but the Town were very persistent, and the narrowest shaves were seen when Agnew, Jas. Thompson and Norman Thomson were active. Moreover, Dennis had been hurt, and the Town were thus short-handed, but, as the Bristol papers say, they more than held their own, and thoroughly deserved their success.

The forward play was clever, Norman Thomson doing brilliant things, and engineering most of the attacks, but the whole team played with

DASH AND ENTHUSIASM.

Each department took its share of the work, and while the middle men were not at their best all the time, they stuck to a hard task with pluck and zeal, and were entitled to their share of appreciation. The defence was wonderful in the early stages, and not a man but merited all the praise he received from the onlookers as well as in his wage packet on Tuesday.

It was a fine start, and the play of the Town won applause from nearly 15,000 spectators.

BRENTFORD'S BOUNCE.

Perhaps we expected too much on Monday night. Brentford have been in lowly circumstances for years, and even the merit of their performance on Saturday, when they trounced a much-boomed Brighton and Hove Albion side by four goals clear, did not reduce confidence in the ability of the Town to record their second victory. The "Bees" have been reorganised during the close season, and to good purpose. They have no highly-priced stars, but they have men of

FERVENT INTENTION.

and this they quickly showed to the 9,000 spectators. In the view of some spectators they nearly "bounced the Town out of it."

Luton began brightly enough, but there was something about the Brentford resistance that seemed to puzzle the Town forwards, and make difficult the work of defence. For the greater part of the game the ball was offener in the environment of Ferguson, and far more frequently aimed at his charge, but the visitors went into the fray wholeheartedly. Where danger was, there were they, and unafraid, and, like outposts, their wing men and centre-forward were aye ready to foray and despoil.

For half-an-hour the Town were the more aggressive, and then there came a change. They seemed to falter in the face of

RESOLUTE RESISTANCE.

and Brentford assumed the offensive. For about ten minutes Brentford were the better side, and threatened to run away with the result. They would run away for nothing less: their play said so. And it was after two or three hectic assaults, in which Watkins had been the ring-leader and chief source of danger, that they were rewarded.

A burst on the right wing was nullified, but the ball came back to Hodnett. He used his wits, and instead of sending his ball to a rather crowded wing, he shot it into the middle, where DEARN, quick-witted, took possession, and, in almost less time than it takes to tell, had beaten Mingay with a neat shot.

There were warm moments after this, for Brentford had well held, and when Mingay was nudged by Lane as

HE HELD THE BALL

after catching it, there seemed likely to be another goal, but the fallen custodian managed to scrape the ball away, and nothing worse than a corner-kick happened. Luton made strong efforts to get on terms before changing over, but they could not.

It was soon evident after the restart that the Town were bent upon retrieving the position. They assailed the Brentford goal, and the wingers were prominent with fine centres that none met. The visiting defenders kicked anywhere for safety, and so there were several corners. Five minutes of this half had elapsed when Clark took a corner, and after the ball had been in and out two or three times, MILLAR judged its flight to a nicety, rushed in, leapt high above several heads, and headed the ball downwards—the correct way to head a ball in the goal-mouth—and

THE SCORES WERE LEVEL.

Brentford were then chained up, and the Town were swinging the ball about much better than in the first half. We felt sure the lead had come when Jas. Thompson was swept off his feet as he was boring into goal. The penalty was disputed, of course, but it was unquestionably an offence, and Thompson took it upon himself to take the kick. Everybody is saying how unwise it was; had he scored they would not have done so, but, with visions of a like mess last season, and doubts as to whether he can make the best use of a dead ball, I thought that Graham, who has been very successful on like occasions, should have been invited. Anyway, Thompson shot yards wide.

This was disappointing, but the black-edge was taken off very soon, when Pointon took a dainty pass, careered down to put across a lovely centre, and Norman THOMPSON headed a very fine goal. Perhaps it would be better to say that he completed

A GRAND MOVEMENT.

Luton had many chances after this, and Jas. Thompson came very near to scoring several times, but failed to do so, and perhaps the best shot of the whole game was a storming drive by Rennie from 30

yards, which skimmed the angle of bar and upright. Brentford came again in the closing stages, and so energetic were they that it required all the strength and alacrity of the Town defenders to prevent a score. They were successful, however, and the fourth point was safely garnered.

Taking the two games, I think one must wait before criticising keenly. The ground and the heat were all against really good football, and on last season's showing Luton need heavier turf. The two results have confirmed opinion that there is splendid material, and without suggesting that there is

A BRILLIANT SIDE.

I think that if the players are kept together, steer clear of jealousy, and maintain the team spirit that was more evidence on Saturday than on Monday they will have a hard in the ultimate decision as to which club shall rise. Mingay has kept goal well in both games. Some criticise his running out but they had only applause for his venture that deprived Watkins of a goal on Monday night. There is, however, need for some better understanding between backs and goalkeeper as to who shall take care of the attacker who challenges the goalkeeper, and Mingay will concede goals if he tries to hold on to the ball when he has caught it on the goal-line. Some of his saves in both games were very fine, but this

SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDING

should be immediately established. Graham is a grand back. On this form he can play with any team in the country. Till is as good as ever, and his speed and accuracy should convince folk that he is not the "old man" they think. There is a tendency to think a man is old if he loses his hair or if his legs go a bit out of the straight. Joe Till will hold his own for many years yet.

The halves left something to be desired, because they desire something themselves. We shall not see the best of Richards or Millar until we get some rain—a lot of it. Rennie is gradually improving, though apt to overkick his forwards. They have all done well, but will do better with heavy grounds. So will the forwards. Norman Thomson's play at Bristol was that of a genius. He was not so good on Monday night, perhaps, but is

A FIRST-CLASS FORWARD.

and should get on well with Pointon, who has speed and centres well except for a slight tendency to pull the ball behind his forwards. He will get over that fault all right. Agnew is as industrious as ever; his thrustfulness is very disconcerting. Dennis was very good until injured on Saturday, and Clark made a splendid deputy on Monday. The position will give the directors pause when next they consider its occupant. Jas. Thompson was at his best on Saturday, but was off colour and unlucky on Monday. He should not have another experience like that, and I hope to see him make up for it on Saturday, when Swindon come.

THE RESERVES.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

At Luton on Saturday:—

LUTON TOWN RESERVES 2

PETERBORO' AND FLETTON ... 1

Scorers.—For Luton: Keeling, Woods.

For Peterboro': Bruton.

LUTON RESERVES.—Kaine; Wolstenholme, Moir; Black, Gordon, Fraser; Clark, Keeling, Woods, Gillespie, Kelly.

PETERBORO'.—Whitehead; Hutchinson, Sisson; Allen, Porter, Lawson; Ford, McNoughton, Panther, Bruton, Willis.

LONDON COMBINATION.

At Brentford on Monday:—

LUTON TOWN RESERVES 3

BRENTFORD RESERVES 1

Scorers.—For Luton: Keeling (2), Reid.

For Brentford: Anderson.

LUTON RESERVES.—Kaine; Harkins, Moir; Black, Gordon, Fraser; Reid, Keeling, Woods, Gillespie, Kelly.

BRENTFORD RESERVES.—Collins; Barnard, Hodgson; Noble, Beacham, Roddock; Whittin, G. Sims, Anderson, Bazin, Douglas.

Referee.—Mr. P. A. Wilson.

And what of the Reserves? Victory was not too common an experience last season, and two in succession was rather beyond our ken. They, too, have started well, and there is no reason to expect that they will fall away from this very convincing start. Peterborough have a way of picking up good players—that bigger clubs would like to acquire—and they turned out a strong eleven on Saturday. It was unfortunate that the game was marred by improper tactics, and while it is admitted that the Town players were not altogether blameless, the consensus of opinion indicates the visitors were not able to stand with equanimity the grueling they got in the second half. As I was not present I cannot judge, but am sorry that there was trouble. It has been said that because it was the first game of the season the referee should not have ordered a man off, however bad he might have been, but I cannot agree with that view. The referee has his job, and, whether in August or May, if a punishment is merited it is his duty to carry out the instructions of the F.A.

Mr. Ridgway simply did his duty, and knowing him pretty well, I am sure he was sorry to have to take the extreme measure. Panther, the offender, I know only by repute, but he was at Newark last season, and I read that he scored many goals. I have dealt with the referee's point of view in another column, and for the match itself I give the views of "Claudius." He says:—

"It was an agreeable surprise to find queues at the entrance for a Southern League match, and I hope it is going to be a regular experience. The crowd numbered 3,000 and looked to be considerably more. I think they will come again because the fare served up by the Town Reserves was to their liking. It was a vigorous and keenly-contested game, marred only by the incident referred to above. The Town team comprised ten men who have never before played in the club's colours, and Fraser, who played regularly during the closing weeks last season. In the first half play was fairly even, though WOODS and KEELING got goals for Luton. In the second half, apart from the first five minutes, during which BRUTON scored for the visitors, the Reserves were right on top, and but for the splendid exhibition of Harry Whitehead they would have suffered a very severe defeat. The Town forwards bombarded the goal for minutes on end, but Whitehead was always on the spot, and made wonderful saves, and thoroughly deserved the warm appreciation the crowd gave him.

"It was three minutes from time when the regrettable incident occurred. The game had been far too vigorous at times, and, apparently, the referee had allowed something for the fact that it was the opening match, and the conditions were not altogether conducive to good temper. In my opinion Sisson was the chief culprit, and, if not actually cautioned, he was spoken to by the referee. Then there was a lot of trouble between Clark and Lawson on that flank, and Gordon and Panther in the middle. Clark's cleverness appeared to exasperate Lawson, with the result that the latter fouled the winger, and this led to a brandishing of fists, and cautions. Clark made rings round Lawson, and, if a player is so skilful, he should be content to rely upon the referee to see that he gets justice. Panther and Gordon were spoken to because the former, when benten, had the habit of using his heel in a very dangerous manner, and Gordon adopted retaliatory measures. The latter accepted the official advice, but Panther afterwards took a wild lunge at the ball or at Moir—very dangerous play under any circumstances—and Linesman Vass' flag went up, the crowd meanwhile vigorously hooting the offender. Just what Mr. Ridgway saw I don't know, but, either he saw something or the attitude of the crowd and the linesmen drew his suspicions, and he first consulted Linesman Butler and then Linesman Vass, and as a result Panther betook himself to the dressing-room.

"It cannot be said that Mr. Ridgway erred on the side of severity, for he had

DOW

MANCHESTER STREET

for

WORLD'S BEST PIPES

DUNHILL — LOEWE — BARLINGS'