

WELCOME POINT WELL WON.

LUTON TOWN MAKE A DRAW AT BRISTOL.

Clark Fills the Bill.

By Crusader.

BRISTOL ROVERS 1
LUTON TOWN 1

BRISTOL ROVERS.—Whatley; Bennett, Haydon; Britton, Perry, Roberts; Reay, Cosgrove, Phillips, Paterson, King.

LUTON.—Banes, Graham, Richards; Clark, Fulton, Millar, Daly, Roe, Rennie, Yardley, Bedford.

Referee.—Mr. A. W. Lamacraft, Exeter.

UNTIL we stepped out of the train at Bristol on Saturday it was problematical whether the visit would be useless or not. It was cheering to find, however, that a slight thaw had set in, and to learn that the match was a certainty. Referee Lamacraft told me that on the train journey from Exeter he had been telling himself that play would be impossible, that he would just have time to inspect the ground, declare it unfit, and get back to Exeter in time to see the Exeter City v. Brighton match. He discovered that the BRISTOL ROVERS' management had overcome the difficulty by having the snow cleared away, and he declared the ground fit. On the other hand, the match at Exeter was impossible.

WHAT PLYMOUTH THOUGHT.

The Eastville ground was still in a bad condition, but there was evidence that the job had been tackled most thoroughly, and the management deserved full measure of praise. All things considered, the conditions were far better than anyone could have expected, and LUTON TOWN were not sorry that they were able to carry out the programme. Among the crowd of 6,000 spectators were the Plymouth Argyle team, who were unable to play at Newport owing to the state of Somerton Park. Mr. Bob Jack was in charge, and he and his men paid a tribute at the finish to the game put up by the Town, and said that they had merited the point they earned.

BEDFORD'S GOAL.

For myself, I thought the Town were unlucky not to bring both points, and the whole of the team declared that the goal scored by Bedford in the first half was a good goal. Moreover, the Rovers afterwards admitted that the Town left winger was not offside, for the ball went to him off a Rover half-back. The referee did not see this, apparently, and when questioned by Richards at the interval, replied that the linesman also agreed with him. Against that, however, was the admission of the Rover defender, but that did not mend matters.

WHY ROE WAS CAUTIONED.

From this incident arose the caution of Roe at half-time, and on making inquiries I learned that it came about in this way. Richards had spoken to Mr. Lamacraft, and when he had finished Roe remarked, "Play the game, referee. We only want a chance." Whereupon the referee turned round and evidently spoke severely, threatening to send him to the dressing-room. It was not a wise thing for Roe to do, but I am bound to say that the Town did not seem to get equal justice during the first half. I did not blame Mr. Lamacraft for this, but the linesmen, who apparently were influenced by the crowd, which was not nearly so sporting as we have come to expect at Bristol.

Before a Town player had kicked the ball Graham was pulled up for a foul on King. What happened was that the fleet-footed youngster and Graham met in a violent clash, and the winger went down. It was a foul, but there was nothing deliberate about it, and there was no need for the referee to stand and talk to Graham for half-a-minute, nor for the crowd to begin and maintain an intermittent demonstration against the Town players.

AN IMPUDENT FOUL.

There were just as many and just as bad fouls by the Rovers, and for a really impudent case there was nothing so bad as an incident just before the end, when Phillips, prevented by Richards from rushing at Banes, took his revenge on the Town full back. The referee spoke to him, but if any man deserved sending off the field it was Phillips.

"The Shockers" was the nickname bestowed upon the Rovers during the last week or two, because of their victories over Fulham and the Rangers, and it would appear to have got to the heads of some of them.

RICHARDS AS CAPTAIN.

Richards took charge of the side, and was fortunate to win the spin of the coin, but the Town were on the defensive at once as the result of the spilling of King by Graham. They should have taken the lead, for the ball was swung right across the goal, and Reay, who stood almost under the bar, had but to nod the ball to score, but the ball travelled right back across the goal towards the corner flag. There was a great gasp of disappointment, and the Town profited by the escape. They kept the ball going nicely on either flank, and Clark was early prominent. His terrific drive scraped the bar with Whatley leaping frantically to get at it. Then Whatley could not hold a sharp, low drive by Bedford, but there was none up close enough to slip the ball through, and the goalkeeper retrieved and cleared.

RENNIE SANDWICHED.

Even exchanges followed, and the ball moved rapidly from end to end. Once there was a very bad foul on Rennie, who was being overcrowded, and three players went for him at once as the ball came across, and he was brought down in a heap, yet the incident was not penalised. Both wings were being well used, and Clark's combination with his colleagues on this flank brought a lot of danger. They were very troublesome, and it was their fine initiatory work that brought the goal that was disallowed. There was a hot scene in the Rovers' goal-mouth, and several shots against a packed goal were tried without taking effect, and then the ball came to Bedford, who cut in and gave Whatley no chance. The referee gave offside, as already stated.

THE ROVERS' GOAL.

Banes had not had any real test up to this point, and then Graham handled a ball that was going wide of his left hand when he was well out, though there was no danger. From the free kick the ball travelled to Phillips, who hooked it high, and COSGROVE met it as it came down, and with a first-time shot sent the ball well wide of Banes into the net. Within a few minutes Rennie might have equalised, for he was in the act of taking a centre from the left wing, when Bennett intervened. The ball was got away.

GOOD GOALKEEPING.

The Rovers played strongly after this, but were well held by Graham and Richards, and the latter's hefty kicks were of much help to the Town forwards. Once, however, Banes made a grand save by diving to take the ball at the foot of the post. Play quickened as the interval approached, and both goals were assailed. The nearest effort to a score was when Bedford put in a shot that travelled at a great pace, but Whatley made a brilliant save by tipping over the bar. Rennie had two or three shots, and went very close, but the change of ends came without further score.

BRISTOL ROVERS 1
LUTON TOWN 0

In the early stages after the resumption King was pulled up for encroachment on two or three occasions, and the Town made good use of the free kicks, and Whatley managed to get at a fast drive from Bedford. Then there was a hot and prolonged attack by the Rovers, who refused to be driven back. Banes was often called upon, but there was nothing very serious in the work he had for a considerable time. Bedford was active, and after he had threatened the Rovers' goal twice with brilliant runs there was a dash by the Rovers, and Banes made a great save from King, who was unmarked at close range.

Gradually the Town got the upper hand, and play settled in the Rovers' half. However, the halves concentrated on defence, and the Town attack was foiled time after time when an equaliser seemed certain. Once Rennie got to the ball as it came out after Whatley had saved, and

everybody felt sure the scores were level as the ball went for the farther corner of the goal, but Whatley got to it somehow, and the ball spun off his hand and went past the upright. The Town now had the measure of the opposition, and Graham and Richards were playing well up behind the halves, near the middle line. The Rovers' forwards were seeing very little of the ball, though the wingers made on- or two raids.

ROE AND RENNIE.

The pressure was never relaxed, and Clark had many shots. Fulton was holding Phillips well, and it was good to see the way he loosed the ball to the forwards while the Rovers' halves were out of position. The Town refused to loosen their grip, and the equaliser was overdue when it came ten minutes from the end. Fulton drove the ball nicely up the middle after an all-line attack had been beaten off. Roe went for it, accompanied by Haydon, but as the full-back rushed at him Roe deftly back-heeled the ball past him. RENNIE seized the chance promptly, and went in to shoot past Whatley as he advanced, and the scores were level.

HOLDING ON TO IT.

The concluding stages were in favour of the Rovers, for the Town then were content to keep on the defensive, and their rushes were twice very near scoring. Now and then the Town got away, but the machinery was no longer in working order forward, and forwards and halves seemed content to frustrate the efforts of the Rovers. Twice the ball was middled well from the left, and was headed over the bar. The Rovers were distinctly rattled, but the Town kept their heads and resisted all onslaughts until the whistle went.

REARGUARD.

Banes again showed plenty of confidence and skill. He had not the slightest chance with the goal registered against him. His best save was in the second half, when he dived and collared with a sweep of the left hand a shot-centre from King. His weight enabled him to resist the rough attentions of Phillips, and the latter became very peeved when he was sent sprawling by the goalkeeper towards the end of the game. Graham was not quite so certain as in the previous games, but played strongly, and Richards was in his element. Actually the ground was against him, but he was resourceful, and a big factor in defence.

HALVES.

As Millar paid more attention to the winger than usual, he and Richards got on very well together. Millar was not so active in attack as Clark, who played magnificently. His strength was an asset, and when Roberts took a running charge at him, quite fairly, the Rover measured his length in the snow outside the touch-line, and Clark went on to have a shot. Fulton played grandly in defence, and his quickness of recovery was a feature of the Town's obstructive work. The backs and halves were splendid in solidity, and did remarkably well in such an uncomfortable game.

FORWARDS.

The attack was nippy, the right wing being the better in the first half, but the left did more damage after the interval. Fine triangular work was seen on the right wing at times, and Yardley got Bedford going cleverly. Roe had no superior in control, but there was rather a lack of ginger in front of goal. Rennie was dogged closely, and every time he got near the ball there was one, often two, and sometimes three opponents hanging on to him. He withstood a lot of buffeting.

For the Rovers, Whatley played his customary fine game, and Bennett and Haydon were good backs, the latter especially. In the middle line there was little to choose between Perry and Roberts. Forward, the honours could be fairly evenly apportioned. Phillips was a dangerous customer by reason of his thrustfulness, but he got few opportunities of shooting, fewer than Rennie, but the wingers did well.