

POINT FROM THE ROVERS.

LUTON TOWN DRAW AT BRISTOL.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN brought a point home from BRISTOL ROVERS after a hard, and sometimes unpleasant struggle. It was not a whit more than they deserved, for with a shade of luck they would have finished a goal ahead. Taking the game throughout, there was little to choose between the teams, for the Rovers, inspired by their victories over Fulham and Queen's Park Rangers, played as though they meant to lower the colours of the Town for certain.

□ □ □

They were met with equal determination, however, and but for a decision that deprived them of a good goal in the first half, the Town would have won. The team all-round played well, though the game was rather patchy, inasmuch as first one side and then the other threatened to carry all before them. The Town's best came after the interval, when they were in arrears, and the manner in which they set about drawing level left no illusions as to their fitness generally.

□ □ □

When they had drawn level, however, they resorted to the policy of defending what they had won by sheer merit, and came very near to losing it. Still, it is one thing to be taking part, and another to be watching and perhaps bemoaning a change of tactics. It is possible that had the Town maintained their attacking policy, in which there was often fine strategy, they would have won, but there was always a lot of danger in the raids of the Rovers' fleet wingers, and the hustling Phillips.

□ □ □

On Friday the Town Club received news from Bristol that there had been a heavy fall of snow after the ground had been cleared, and the match was doubtful. However, on Saturday morning a lot of unemployed men from the Labour Exchange were got to work, and the ground was well cleared, and though hard, and slippery in places, the Town have played on several worse pitches this season.

□ □ □

Apart from the long spell of success the Town have had at Eastville, which is seven seasons now, there were other omens for those who believed in them. A black cat welcomed their appearance, and would not leave them. There was also a self-conscious youngster in a royal blue jersey parading the corridor to the dressing-room. He looked somewhat crest-fallen when the Town turned out in royal blue jerseys.

□ □ □

David Richards was entrusted with the captaincy, and resumed the reins well, for he guessed the right side up when the coin fell. David never lost his grip of the game, and though it would be wrong to deduce that the Town defence was chiefly responsible for the point brought home, its solidarity probably evoked the envy of emissaries from other clubs, for there were a few.

□ □ □

There was not a lot to choose between the sides in the first half. At the outset a free kick against Graham, before a Luton player had touched the ball, made some of us quake. The free-kick was so well placed that Reay should have scored, but let the ball hit his head, instead of meeting it gently, and it flew right across the ground when it should have reposed in the net. The Rovers' goal had a narrow squeak when a pile-driver from Clark, the best marksman among middle men on the field, shaved the bar.

□ □ □

Play was fast and even, and there was no tendency on the part of any defender to cut out risk. The other fellow must be the one to beware of danger, seemed to be the principle of the hefty fellows of both sides. To a most unsportsmanlike display from a part of the crowd — the worst I have known at Bristol for several years — it was right for the Rovers to go all out and all in, and it was the Luton players' business to avoid hurt, but when the Town defenders adopted the same line, howls and execrations filled the air.

□ □ □

Even in the grand stand were shouters exhorting Phillips to use his fists, presumably because Graham and Richards were using weight when warranted, though Graham has nothing on Phillips in the little matter of avoirdupois. Still, the majority of the spectators did show appreciation now and then of good play by the Town.

□ □ □

Banes had very little to do before the Rovers got their goal, but previously the Town had been disappointed, and though Mr. Lama-craft could not have seen the incident, Bedford got a good goal after the ball had come to him from a Rover, who confessed afterwards. The referee gave Bedford offside. Twenty-five minutes had elapsed when the Rovers got their lead. Graham was blame-worthy for handling, and from the free-kick Phillips received, and though he made no real attempt to pass, and hardly knew where the ball had gone, COSGROVE received without waiting for it to hit the ground, and skilfully shot wide of Banes' outstretched arm, and the ball went into the net.

□ □ □

One of the best bits of combined headwork I have seen for a long time came when the ball was carried a long way by the Rovers' halves and backs by judicious heading, but the attack broke down eventually when Fulton took a turn with his head. In the first half-hour, however, Whatley had more work than Banes. Rennie got a few shots in spite of the attentions of a group of opponents, and one of the best shots of the match was a fast drive by Bedford, which Whatley brilliantly saved by tipping over the bar. This was just before the change of ends, which came with the Rovers leading.

ROVERS		1
TOWN		0

□ □ □

The Rovers were the more aggressive after a quick start by the Town, and several times threatened to add to their lead, but Banes saved cleverly, a left-handed save from King evoking a cheer, and well deserving it. The Town forwards then got into their stride, and Whatley had plenty to do, in spite of excellent work by Haydon, and the resolute tackling of the middle men.

□ □ □

Clark was a potent factor in many attacks, and has never played so well in the Town colours. He was a real driving force, and initiated many attacks. So strongly did the Town assert their superiority for some time that Richards and Graham each shot past, and were generally in the vicinity of the middle line. Now and then King or Reay made tracks and gave trouble, but for well over 20 minutes the Town had much the better of the argument.

□ □ □

Bedford gave the young Britton and Bennett a warm time, and two runs took him right through, but neither of his finishing passes found the opening. Good shots were few and far between, but Rennie did get a chance at last, and it seemed as if a drive at the farther corner of the goal was a certain scorer, but Whatley made a characteristic save the ball going round the post for a corner kick.

□ □ □

There were many corner kicks, but the Rovers defended gallantly, Haydon in particular, and we were wondering if there would be any further goal when it came, and a really fine point it was. Fulton had wriggled out of a bunch of attackers, and shot the ball forward. Roe accepted, and as Haydon lustily challenged, the inside right, who had his back to the Rovers' goal, with a crisp twirl of the foot slipped the ball forward for RENNIE to snap up, run a yard or two, and then, as Whatley came out, the ball was steered past him into the net.

□ □ □

The Rovers made desperate attempts to regain the lost ground, and with the Town forwards leaving their places to come to the assistance of a defence that had not been in very sore straits, the ball was kept in the Town half for most of the remaining minutes. Twice the ball was headed over from centres from the left, but the end came without further score.

□ □ □

Banes again shaped exceedingly well, and never gave the slightest cause for misgiving. He came out, collected and cleared the ball coolly, and two or three times shouldered off opponents who tried to dispossess him. Graham and Richards again gave a splendid display, and were vigorous and resourceful. Their kicking was clean and of good length, and the fierce rushes of Phillips were countered as neatly as could be desired.

□ □ □

The halves did well, and Clark will take some shifting from the right-half position if he keeps up this level. There was no better middle man on view. His dribblings were not overdone, for he released the ball nicely to Roe or Daly, or, if they were covered, was ready to go and take a chance himself. Moreover, he was capable of standing up to the vigour of opponents, and, when they tried conclusions with him, did not come off the worse.

□ □ □

Fulton played a capital game, chiefly in defence. He kept a close grip on Phillips, and I am sure the latter would not complain of the Town pivot's methods at all. Speed in recovery was the main asset of the Town centre-half. Millar was not in the picture a great deal, but was useful, and certainly held his opponents better by playing wider to the wing than is his wont. The result was beneficial to Richards.

□ □ □

In attack there was not much to choose. Daly and Roe got on very well, the latter feeding his partner with "a spoon," and now and again making a bee-line for goal that boded trouble. Daly responded well, especially in the first half. Yardley and Bedford did not make their presence felt as much as usual until after the change of ends, but the ground was against the style of Yardley. However,

he got Bedford going to some tune afterwards, and had the conditions been better it is probable that Rennie would have been more on the target.



Rennie came in for rough usage. In the first half he was jammed by three opponents, and it seemed to be a clear case of a penalty kick, but there was a more flagrant case shortly afterwards, when he found his ankles rattled as he was about to take a shot at close quarters. Usually he was police-manned by a double escort, and was as sore as anybody at the end of the game. Still, he got the goal all right, and had reason to feel satisfied.



The Rovers played with plenty of team spirit and keenness, and will not descend in the table. Whatley I have always considered to be one of the best three goal-keepers in the Division. Bennett is a useful back, but Haydon is another player for whom I have a great liking, and I can never understand how he could lose his place in the Rovers' side. He is courageous, kicks with great power, and is a splendid tackler.



Perry is a tall and unorthodox pivot, getting there somehow, but is better than he was a year ago, and may develop into a fine player if he can keep up the pace to the end of the game. He is a big 'un. Roberts was better in some respects, being a determined tackler, and making good use of the ball. Britton appears to be rather out of his class at present, though showing promise.



Of the forwards, Phillips was the most dangerous in the eyes of the spectators, but to my mind there was more craft and football in every other member of the line. I liked King very much. He is fast, centres well on the move, and is likely to make a name. The others did very well, but ran up against a rugged defence.



There were about 6,000 spectators, and among the lookers-on were the Plymouth Argyle players, who had not been able to fulfil their engagement at Newport.

Referee.—Mr. A. W. Lamacraft, Exeter.

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

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

LUTON TOWN 1

BRISTOL ROVERS 1