

HAPPY HUNTING GROUND.

LUTON TOWN'S SERIAL OF SUCCESS AT BRISTOL.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN survived their ordeal at Eastville on Saturday, when they deprived BRISTOL ROVERS of yet another point, and played them for the sixteenth consecutive time without defeat. It was a narrow squeak, for the goal that enabled them to achieve this was scored when only four minutes remained for play, and for eighty-three minutes they had struggled against a deficit. In the circumstances it was a highly creditable performance, even allowing for the lowly position of the Rovers in the competition.

A flying start was made by the re-organised Rovers' team, in which there were half-a-dozen changes as compared with the side that went down at Luton a fortnight ago by three goals clear. The performance was the more praiseworthy because on the run of the game the changes made for a vast improvement in the Rovers' team work, and on the whole they thoroughly deserved their lead at the interval, fortuitously though the goals were scored.

They were two goals ahead three minutes after the start, a feat that few Bristolians could remember at Eastville in a League game. A quick run on the Town left wing was thwarted; then the Rovers dashed down on their left; forced a corner; Banes had thumped out the flag-kick placed by Roberts; Forbes headed the ball back, and it appeared to be well over the line when Kingham made a desperate dash and pulled it from under the bar with his hand. A penalty was the only possible award, and HAYDON had no difficulty in netting ninety seconds from the start.

Straightway from the re-start the Rovers made tracks again, the left wing doing the damage, and it was all Richards could do to frustrate Roberts. Fraser and Dix joined in the scuffle, and the Town half-back robbed them, but his kick sent the ball against an opponent; Roberts pounced upon the ball, shot without hesitation, and it went sharply across and landed high up in the farther corner of the net for a pretty goal.

For a long time the Rovers threatened to pile up a much stronger lead, for they had the better of the game. Banes made splendid saves, and his backs were kept busy. When the Town got going, Daly and McInnes, the latter especially, had chances, but they were unable to bring them to fruition. Whatley had something to do to keep out a stinging drive from McInnes, and a header from Clark. Once Rennie made the crowd gasp as he coaxed the ball past Plenderleith, M'Craig, Bennett and Haydon in turn, and then went on to shoot from eight or ten yards range, but he dragged the ball just wide.

Banes made a grand save from Forbes; cleared several fine centres from Reay, saw Phillips go very close twice, and Dix twice miss through being hampered when he had dribbled to close quarters. At the other end Whatley won applause by his bright anticipation, and before the interval the Town were playing so well that they must have opened their account but for the sterling defensive work of Haydon, Bennett, Plenderleith and Whatley. The Rovers, however, crossed over with the advantage:—

ROVERS 2
TOWN Nil

For a little while after the resumption the Rovers rather more than held their own, but as the game progressed the Town opened out better, and gradually asserted

superiority. Their halves improved immensely, and the ball was swung about well. Whatley had more to do than Banes though the latter had harder work than for many weeks, and brought off some fine saves. Whatley, however, cut out dangerous centres from Daly, and also made extraordinarily good saves from all the forwards.

It seemed as if he would not be beaten, but the pressure increased, and eventually RENNIE drove in a marvellous shot that had the tall goalkeeper beaten all the way, and the ball went in and out of the net at a tremendous pace. Almost immediately Drinnan had the hardest luck in failing to equalise, for he accepted a centre from Daly that beat all the defenders; with only Whatley to beat he slipped down, and the goalkeeper picked up the ball and cleared.

Finis work by Phillips and Roberts all but succeeded, and play went from end to end at a great pace, but the Town were the more dangerous, and Haydon won applause again and again for his stout-hearted defence. There was always menace in the approaches of the Town, but the equalising goal came with dramatic suddenness. Richards was well in the Rovers' half when he lofted the ball into the middle; Drinnan hooked it along, and YARDLEY darted in and met the ball while it was in the air and crashed it into the net.

The closing minutes were sternly contested. Phillips and Dix made strenuous efforts at the one end, and in a swift breakaway Rennie and McInnes came through to beat the opposition, but the former's shot went wide. Right to the last second the players grimly fought, and at the whistle all were glad of the rest. The game was keenly but cleanly fought, and though there were free-kicks in plenty, there was not a vicious foul during the game. Clark met with the worst mishap, probably, for he had the deep imprint of Haydon's boot across his chest, making broad and painful abrasions.

For the Town Banes played a grand game in goal, and when they had settled down little fault could be found with Kingham and Richards. They kicked and tackled well throughout. The halves were slow in finding the measure of the opposition, and were often beaten by the "dead" ground, but subsequently played splendidly to a man. Rennie led his line well, and Yardley and Drinnan got a lot of work out of the wingers.

Whatley is as good a goalkeeper as ever, which is saying a great deal. He was covered by a sturdy pair of backs, Haydon in particular. The halves were better in the break-up than in the distribution, and tired in the second half. Phillips and Forbes were very clever forwards, and Roberts justified the experiment of playing a half-back at outside-left. All the line played well, however, and the team must be about the strongest at the Rovers' disposal to-day. The game deserved a better attendance than 5,000 spectators.

BRISTOL ROVERS 2
LUTON TOWN 2

BRISTOL ROVERS. — Whatley; Bennett, Haydon; M'Craig, Plenderleith, Hamilton; Reay, Forbes, Phillips, Dix, Roberts.

LUTON TOWN. — Banes; Kingham, Richards; Fraser, Clark, Millar; Daly, Yardley, Rennie, Drinnan, McInnes.

Referee:—Mr. A. G. Price, London.