

FOUR AGAINST BRISTOL ROVERS

LUTON TOWN AGAIN EXCEL AT HOME

Skilful Team Work.

By *Crusader.*

LUTON TOWN 4
BRISTOL ROVERS 1

LUTON. — G. G. Edwards; Kingham, Hodgson; Clark, McGinnigle, Fraser; Bryce, M'Nestry, Yardley, Rennie, Slicer.
BRISTOL ROVERS. — Berry; Price, Russell; Black, Dinsdale, Dennis; Forbes, Pointon, Attwood, Dix, Young.

Referee: Mr. F. W. Reeve, Devonport.

IT would not be an exaggerated compliment to Bristol Rovers to say that they were never beaten until the last five minutes. They kept going even then, but had shot their bolt, and it was little short of miraculous that they averted a much heavier defeat. Had the going been decent there would have been more goals in the last fifteen minutes, when the Rovers' defenders were obviously leg weary, but never lost their pluck. Not even the most fervent partisan of the Rovers would claim that the Town got more than they deserved; they were much the better side, and that verdict is not inconsiderate of the spirit and skill of the Rovers. The Town maintained the quality shown ever since the re-construction of the attack, and the more we see of it the more are we all bound to deplore its tardy revelation.

SUPERIOR FOE AND AFT.

The compliment is rather to the spirit of the Rovers than to their skill by comparison with that of the Town, for fore and aft the Town were superior; their positioning was not a deal in advance of that of the Rovers, but their speed in taking the short and straight cut for goal, accuracy in making the ball do something, energy in challenging at close quarters, and their marksmanship all counted in their favour, and the margin was not a whit too impressive. They were quicker on the ball, and the distribution was more open and precise, though now and then the Rovers revealed a delightful knowledge of the short passing game. Indeed, I doubt if there has been a game at Luton this season in which the ball has been kept on the carpet so well by both teams.

TRICKY CONDITIONS.

The Town early made contact with the Rovers' defence, and M'Nestry headed over a good centre by Bryce. In a further rush by the Town right wing Dennis was jarred in collision with M'Nestry, but was able to continue after a revive from Trainer Barr. Berry was soon tested, Rennie and M'Nestry trying him with long stuff, and after a skirmish or two by the Rovers' left wing Yardley tried to sneak one in close to the foot of the upright, but the custodian was there. — A sharp tackle by Kingham was necessary to foil Attwood, and then the Town opened out, and though the ball and the ground combined to play scurvy tricks, there was a lot of shooting at Berry's charge. The best shot so far was a pile-driver from Clark, and Russell's head must have hummed as the ball rebounded behind the goal-line for a corner.

RENNIE SCORES.

Berry behaved splendidly in several crises, and then Edwards had his first chance to distinguish himself, for in a bright movement initiated by Forbes and carried on by Pointon, the latter was but three or four yards from goal, the downfall of which seemed imminent, but Edwards strode out, snapped up the ball and cleared. The Town returned, and Slicer and Bryce each endeavoured to send the ball across, but the defence was equal, though anxious. Eighteen minutes had elapsed when M'Nestry took possession, and when a pass to the wing was expected he darted past Russell en route for goal; the full back flicked his feet from under him, and the referee promptly awarded a free-kick. M'Nestry fell inside the penalty area, but the offence was just outside. RENNIE took the shot, and though the Rovers lined up, he contrived to get in a fast shot that cleared all heads and landed inside the upright, with Berry unable to get near. The goalkeeper pro-

not a sight of the ball until it was passing.

D LEAD.

The Rovers set up a strong attack, and all the energy of the Town halves and backs was needed for a few moments, especially in dealing with Forbes and Pointon, who were working with nice understanding. Edwards had to fist away a centre from the winger, but relief came, and the Town then had the better of the exchanges to the interval. They pressed hard, and Berry had any amount of work. Bryce was getting more work than Slicer at this period, and might have done much better had he passed into the middle, for his shots were always cut off. Many shots were aimed at Berry's charge now, and he did well to hold a lot. Yardley was unlucky when Price turned aside a short range shot, and several corners were conceded by the Rovers' backs. The Rovers' left wing came into action now and then, but Edwards was not in demand, and a terrific onslaught on Berry's goal followed. This was fought off, but Russell completely miskicked a moment later, and from Bryce's centre there was a thrilling struggle in the goal-mouth. Berry twice punched away before Slicer headed past him; even then the ball struck Russell, but it came just right for YARDLEY to head into the net. Slicer had to be assisted from the field, but the Town almost rushed the Rovers' defence again before the whistle went. Yardley and his right wing nearly forcing a goal.

TOWN 2
ROVERS 0

The early stages of the second period found the Town still the more aggressive side, and they deserved to increase their lead. Several assaults were beaten off, and then Clark put in some sterling work, and the ball was sent through the middle; Yardley seemed likely to take possession, but M'NESTRY, always on the pounce, dashed past him with the ball at his toes, left the backs standing and beat Berry as the goalkeeper ran out. It was a fine goal, and typical of the scorer's opportunism. The Rovers did not take this lying down, however, and now maintained a steady persistency in attack that gave some cause for care to the Town defence, but few opportunities for shooting came their way. A delightful bout in which Fraser and Slicer paved the way for Yardley excited the crowd, and the centre-forward seemed a certain scorer, but Berry made a timely dash and got in the way of the shot.

DENNIS'S PENALTY KICK.

Berry was again assailed with work, and proved a clever custodian. He saved many shots, and his success seemed to give the Rovers more heart, and they attacked again. The right wing made headway, and Forbes ran round Fraser very skilfully, and was a foot or two inside the penalty area, though not in a particularly dangerous position, when the half-back whipped his feet from under him. DENNIS took the penalty kick, and Edwards was given no chance to save, the ball travelling very fast and along the ground right away from him. The Rovers accepted this tonic, and the Town halves seemed to be a bit flustered. They were given more running about now than ever before, and Kingham and Hodgson had to work hard. Then Hodgson heartened his men with a dashing clearance, and Yardley presented Bryce with a perfect pass, but the winger failed to turn the ball in front, and Berry had no difficulty in taking the ball from such a distance. Bryce was again unable to complete anything useful after M'Nestry had similarly served him, but he made some amends the next minute when he quite outwitted the defenders by a back-heel that enabled M'Nestry to rush through, and after a struggle with a couple of defenders to turn the ball across goal; Slicer got it and shot, but there was not enough powder, and Berry saved.

M'NESTRY AGAIN.

Slicer then sprinted through, after Rennie and Fraser had helped him to a splendid position, and passed beautifully to Yardley, who had the goal at his mercy, but the shot went straight to the safe hands of Berry. Nevertheless the Town were now masters, and Berry was

constantly tested. Rennie went through in clever fashion to shoot across goal, and M'Nestry turned the ball into the net, but the whistle sounded for offside. Berry then saved a good shot from Clark, who went up the wing to take a pass by Bryce, and from the clearance the Rovers made ground. Edwards was required to deal with two or three high shots, and took them in easy style. A free kick fell to the Town some distance outside the Rovers' penalty area, and McGinnigle steered the ball into a ruck of players; it was scrambled out to the left, and Slicer returned it for M'NESTRY to head the fourth goal.

In the closing stages the Town made fierce assaults, and Yardley and Rennie would have scored had they been able to get more power behind their shots, while Berry made some capital saves. Edwards had to save a free kick taken by Russell, and both teams were tired when the whistle terminated a capital game.

EASY FOR EDWARDS.

Edwards had very little work, but just enough to show that he knows something about the game, and to satisfy those who did not see him as guardian for the University the previous week. He impressed the crowd by his coolness, his neat fielding, and his big goal kicks. Kingham and Hodgson again proved reliable, and their tackling and covering frustrated the Rovers' inside forwards at every turn when a shot was sought. McGinnigle again won golden opinions by his skilful and clean work; his footwork has always been good enough, and now he has achieved pace. He might use his weight to advantage, for a player able to resist charges should also be able to give them. He was the best half-back on the field. Clark showed improvement on Wednesday's game, and he and McGinnigle gave Dix so little chance that the much-boomed youngster was rarely in the picture. Fraser was not so good as usual in defence, but was a real force in attack.

FINE FORWARDS.

The forwards again combined magnificently, and there would not have been a single weak spot if Bryce had centred more often when expected to do so instead of shooting. Allowances must be made, however, for the fact that he has come over from the left but recently. His approach work was all right, and only in the passes was he blameworthy. M'Nestry again proved a tiresome customer, thanks to his control, amazing speed and stamina, and Dinsdale was quite tired out before the end. Rennie was a little less prominent than in the two previous League games, but won a lot of applause by his cool and delightful passing, and his co-operation with Yardley and Slicer. Slicer did not shine so much, either, but his centres were well timed, and he required a lot of holding, while Yardley played with even greater dash than usual, and was always a source of anxiety to the Rovers' defence. A little steadiness in front of goal is all that he requires to make more marks on opponents' goal averages. The line as a whole showed fine understanding, and the co-ordination with the middle men was often brilliant. Skilful team work was the key to success.

ROVERS' PLUCK.

For the Rovers Berry played finely, saving many shots that seemed certain to beat him. His backs were rugged in style, but had a lot of work. Black and Dennis did very well, and the latter was the best of the line, taking both defence and attack, though Black gave his wing some lovely passes. Dinsdale was a worker, but did not meet with as much success as usual against the Town. Dix was disappointing, for he was well marked. I liked Forbes best, and he owed much to the careful passes given by Pointon. Young was a craftsman, and Attwood a rare battler, and though defeated thoroughly, the Rovers were not disgraced. They played hard and pluckily, in a game that was clean and well-conducted.

There were 8,000 spectators, which was a good attendance in such cold and uncomfortable weather.