

LUTON'S FINE VICTORY

BRISTOL CITY MADE A GALLANT BUT FRUITLESS FIGHT

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN won for the second season in succession at Ashton Gate, but Bristol City gave them a very hard struggle, and the issue was always in the balance. Nevertheless, the Town merited success by their all-round steadiness and more methodical display against a side which had speed and courage in plenty.

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CONDITIONS were not too good, but still very much better than in any recent games, for the ground had been in excel-



JOE COEN

lent state until rain came during Saturday morning, and left the surface greasy. In the early stages of the match, rain fell lightly, but later eventually ceased, and the worst interference was through a gusty breeze.

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COEN had to be on the alert from the start, but so well did his backs play that, for a long time, his work was chiefly in nipping out to pick up the loose ball while Nelson and the backs held off the eager opposition. A very narrow escape for the City goal came when Rich snapped up a pass from Martin and raced right through to shoot past Wilson as the goalkeeper came out, but the ball just missed the mark.

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HODGE was the most troublesome member of the home attack, but Smith kept him well in check generally, and, although Lane made many desperate efforts to bore a way past the Town defence, Nelson kept him under close surveillance. Midfield play was the order, with the City giving the ball a lot of boot, and the Town trying to keep the game open.

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AFTER A QUIET TIME, Stephenson took a pass from the right, and, speeding clear of the opposing back, went almost into goal before turning the ball inside for BALL to score almost at will. It was a cleverly-won goal, and acted as a tonic to both teams. The City were foiled by clever saves by Coen, but there were occasions when the City had to defend hard to keep out the Town and the lead was retained to the change of ends.

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FOR A FULL TEN MINUTES after change of ends, the City battered at the Town defence, and Coen evoked applause by magnificent saves from Lane, White, and Armstrong. The Town defence was severely tested, but did not yield an inch, and played very coolly, and received good assistance from the inside forwards. Now and then Ball and his wingers caused a flutter, but it was some time before the team got moving smoothly.

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SUDDENLY, the Town team seemed to find their best form, and they gave the City defence quite as stiff a time as had

been experienced by the Town rearguard. Again and again the forwards combined skilfully, and had the City backs and goalkeeper anxious. Stephenson was very elusive and, with Ball and Rich getting splendid passes from the inside forwards and the halves, there was much excitement

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SEVERAL close shaves meant little, and nearly half an hour had passed when there was an equalising goal. It came quite as a surprise, especially for Coen. A free-kick for "hands" was taken by Brinton, and headed out; the Town defenders rushed forward and, when the ball was returned, LANE was alone and rushed to it just before Coen could get it, and turned it into the net, the goalkeeper's appeal for offside being unheeded.

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MORE SPIRIT was infused into the game by both sides after this, and, for a few minutes the Town defence was hard pressed again, but held steady, and the forwards came back into the picture. Stephenson and Rich swung the ball across many times, so well were they supplied with passes, and there were really brilliant passing movements on the Town left, in which Roberts and Stephenson were prominent.

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HALF A DOZEN SHOTS by Stephenson in this half had beaten the goalkeeper, but had been diverted by defenders, but there came a bright short-passing run by Ball and STEPHENSON, and they went right through the defence in quick time for the winger to wind up with a shot which gave Wilson no chance whatever. An appeal for offside was rightly refused, for neither of the Town players got in front of the ball as it was passed.

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CLOSING STAGES were not very interesting, for, though both sides made strong efforts, they were held in check by good defenders, who gave nothing away.

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COEN was on his best form, and made very fine saves, especially in the first few minutes after the interval. Both Booton and Smith were reliable, and Nelson's generalship was a big factor. He gave Lane very few opportunities of a shot, and his headwork was a feature of the game. Finlayson and Fellowes played well to their forwards, and had much to do with the second half revival which won the match.

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FORWARD PLAY of the Town was better than it has been for some time. The passing was more accurate, and there was better positioning. Good use was made of the wingers, and they got the ball over splendidly. Every man played well, and the inside men found their partners with neat passes. Rich and Stephenson were always game for a sprint, and, in the second period, Stephenson, ably encouraged by all his colleagues, made a hack of Bristol's Roberts. Ball put life into his work, and was unlucky not to get another brace of goals.

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BRISTOL CITY'S best were Roberts at right-back in the first half, but Bridge was the steadier afterwards. Wilson had a lot of luck with shots that just missed the target when he was out of goal, and his backs and Pearce covered up a lot. Pearce did well, but Morgan and Brinton, while giving good service to their forwards, found much difficulty in checking the Town attack. Lane and Hodge were the best of the City's forwards.

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LUTON TOWN 2
(Ball, Stephenson)

BRISTOL CITY 1
(Lane)

BRISTOL CITY.—Wilson; Roberts, Bridge; Morgan, Pearce, Brinton; Hodge, Armstrong, Lane, White, Randall.

LUTON TOWN.—Coen; Booton, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Rich, Martin, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee.—J. H. Whittle, Worcester.