

Football.

The Southern League.

BRENTFORD v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Brentford on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 1 goal.

Brentford nil.

The teams were as follow:—

Brentford—Spicer; Wylie and Gilmour; Regan, Broughton, and McEleney; McElhaney, McSwan, Turnbull, Stormont, and Andrews.

Luton—Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Hawkes, White, and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney, and Colvin.

Referee, Mr. Nat Whittaker.

Although Brentford had failed to obtain a victory in their three engagements since their promotion to the first division of the Southern League, they had been spoken of as having given some very plucky displays, and inasmuch as the three battles in question had been fought on foreign soil, it was generally anticipated that they would show to considerable advantage when they got on their own ground and before their own particular crowd.

Of course, last season Brentford did remarkably well in the second division of the League, and with the addition of such men as Stormont, the old Hotspur, and Turnbull, who used to play a very good game for Milwall, they might reasonably be expected to cut a decent figure in the better-class company which the premier division provides. It was therefore with some trepidation that I followed the fortunes of the Luton eleven to the Middlesex town.

Between two and three thousand persons turned out to witness the encounter, but they did not all pay for admission. The apple-trees in the gardens adjoining were literally swarming with youngsters, and some who could hardly come within that definition, but who were equally intent on getting a free view.

When the game once commenced, all my fears for the safety of the Luton team vanished, and I settled down in the comfortable assurance of seeing the visitors win with comparative ease. The men of Brentford seemed to have but little idea of class football, and the efforts of the majority of them were of a strangely amateurish description. Four times during the game they were penalised for hands—not "hands" in the usual acceptation of the term, but deliberate fisting, such as we are accustomed to associate only with the office of custodian.

Instead of taking advantage of their opportunity, however, Luton played almost as badly as their opponents, and there was scarcely a redeeming feature from beginning to end. Luton have now obtained a pretty good start in the League tournament, having obtained six points for four matches, but the forwards will have to "buck up" if we are going to maintain our position.

The kick-off on Saturday took place at half-past three, and the ball was set in motion by a local magnate, Mr. Clifton Robson, the managing director of the Electric Tramway Company. A foul against White for pushing—a little offence to which he is rather prone—was the first incident, and then hands against Gilmour enabled Lindsay to place the ball in the net, but no one touched, though several tried. Luton attacked again, and a header by White went just by the post.

Brentford retaliated, and Andrews, who proved himself to be far and away the best of the forwards, sent in a beautiful shot, which Ord cleared. Colvin next got in evidence at the other end, and after the Brentfordians had cleared from his centre, Blessington made a grand pass to Brown, who shot terribly wide of the mark.

From a throw-in, Turnbull made a smart attempt on the Luton goal, but was repulsed by Ord, and a similar duty was next performed by Spicer to a shot from Williams. Colvin was now making game efforts on the left, but unfortunately his speedy sprints were not taken into proper account by the linesman, who gave him offside when he found the little man clear of his opponents, some of his decisions in this respect being decidedly open to question.

Luton got into the vicinity of the Brentford goal several times, but frittered away their chances of shooting, and at last White endeavoured to set the forwards a better example, but though his intentions were good, his shot was not a brilliant effort. Durrant next secured a corner, and then a marvellously pretty piece of play by Colvin excited admiration, the outside left going bang through and finishing up with a shot which Gilmour fisted out from just under the bar. Again the custodian had to save from Colvin, and then Andrews went away and forced a corner, from which McEleney sent wide.

Colvin, in making another run, was tripped within the twelve-yards' line, but Mr. Whittaker exercised the discretion allowed him, and gave only a free kick. From this Sharp received and put in a good shot, and the homesters did not get relief until a foul was given against Blessington for impeding the goal-keeper. Colvin, however, brought the ball back again, running round his man in fine style, and he centred right across the mouth of goal. The custodian ran to that side of the goal from which the leather had come, leaving Durrant with nothing in the world but to take it through. As luck would have it, he muffed the ball, and thus a glorious opportunity was lost.

From hands against Williams, Brentford had a chance, and Harry improved their prospects by heading into his own goal, but Ord punched away. Then an unpleasant incident occurred, Lindsay being guilty of a nasty foul against Turnbull. It was the only serious foul of which the skipper was guilty throughout the match, but it was just sufficient to get him into bad odour with the spectators. I do wish he would leave this sort of business alone.

Nothing came of the free kick, but from a foul throw by Williams, Turnbull got in a rattling good shot, and Ord had all his work cut out to clear. This was the last item of note before the interval, and the teams crossed over with a clean sheet. When play was resumed, Luton looked like doing better, for after a brief incursion by the homesters, Luton made an attack on the right, and then Colvin made the running again, going through in grand style, and finishing with a lovely shot, which just skimmed the bar. It was the best effort up-to-date.

The left-winger got away again directly afterwards, and put the ball across the goal, but there was no one up to take it. A couple of free kicks fell to Brentford, and Luton responded with a corner, which Colvin placed beautifully. Spicer fisted out, and when Blessington put in again, a foul was given against Luton for impeding the custodian. Luton continued to do the bulk of the aggressive work, but were terribly weak near goal, many chances of shooting being absolutely thrown away.

At last, from a centre by Colvin, who took a fine pass from Tierney, Blessington looked bound to score, but Gilmour dashed across and effected a very lucky clearance. Durrant having nullified another opening by a weak centre behind his forwards, received a nice pass from Brown, and returning the ball to the front, Brown and Blessington both went for it, and the latter succeeded in steering it into the net.

It was a rather weak sort of goal, and many of the spectators hardly realised that the ball had gone into the net. Indeed, I know of one Lutonian who came away from the match thinking that nothing had been scored, and he was so certain on the point that he almost convinced two others that they were labouring under a wrong impression.

After the return to mid-field, Brentford took up the attack, and a foul against Lindsay on the twelve yards line looked a little ominous, but a shot by Turnbull Ord fisted out, and from a corner given by Sharp, McElhaney placed, and McEleny sent wide. A splendid clearance by Lindsay was the next feature, and then Durrant experienced hard lines, his shot running right along the bar. Colvin returned across the mouth of goal, and Brown, by an almost miraculous effort, landed the ball the wrong side of the upright.

Just before the finish, a little excitement occurred in the neighbourhood of the Luton goal, Ord in clearing from a centre by McElhaney, carrying the ball and having a foul given against him. For some reason or other, the free kick was taken no fewer than three times, but ultimately Luton got the ball away, and were making tracks for the other end, when the whistle brought the game to a close, and left Luton victors by one goal.

The game, as already stated, was anything but a successful one from a football point of view, for although it was easy to see that Luton were the classier team, their final efforts were so weak that the Brentford custodian had very little work of a difficult nature fall to his share. The blame for this, I think, rests chiefly with the forwards, for while it is perfectly true that the half-backs were not a patch on the halves of the previous week, the forwards had plenty of opportunities, which they failed to take through lack of directness and determination.

Brown was undoubtedly the weakest man in the quintet, and though the only goal came from a beautiful pass by him, he entirely failed to keep his wings going, and wanted to find big openings like many people get their clothes

—ready-made. Durrant, too, played a very poor game, and really he ought to remember that he has another alternative besides passing to his partner or shooting for goal, and that is to send the ball across to the left wing.

He ought to know something of the effectiveness of this style of play, for I remember Durrant himself winning a very keen match with two successive goals scored from long, swinging passes by George Ekins. Blessington played pretty well, but he rather overdid the tricky business, and little fault, perhaps, could be found with Tierney, except that he has not yet got into that fine shooting form which distinguished him at the end of last season. Colvin was the best of the whole lot, however, and he might have done some damage had he not been pulled up on two or three occasions when nothing but his speed had taken him to the front.

Little need be said of the other men, of whom, perhaps, Lindsay was the most conspicuous, though Ord did what was required of him in his own inimitable style. As to Brentford, Andrews was the only one of the forwards to catch the eye, Turnbull showing a sad falling off from his Milwall form. Stormont, it is true, worked as hard and cleverly as ever, but he did so much fetching and carrying, so to speak, that he appeared to be more of a half-back than forward. One or two of the men in the defence showed fairly good form, but taking them altogether, I should say that Brentford are a very poor lot, and unless strengthened considerably, are booked for the bottom of the League.

Mr. Whittaker appeared to referee with strict impartiality.

In the other Southern League matches, perhaps the most noteworthy was that at Watford, where the Hertfordshire men gained a surprisingly easy victory over Bristol Rovers by four goals to nil. Reading did well in going to Wellingborough and winning by three goals to one, and the Biscuiteers are evidently a force to be reckoned with this season. Kettering were beaten at West Ham by a goal to nil, but the other Northants team, Northampton to wit, gained a victory over New Brompton by three goals to two.

Portsmouth only beat Queen's Park Rangers, who have not yet gained a single point, by a solitary goal, but Swindon were unexpectedly successful in their encounter with Millwall, gaining verdict by two goals to nil. On Monday, in the replayed match at West Ham, Wellingborough were beaten by four goals to two. The following is the League table up to date:—

		Goals.					
	Pld.	Won.	Lst.	Drn.	For.	Agst.	Pts
West Ham United	5	4	0	1	9	2	9
Reading	4	3	0	1	9	3	7
Luton	4	3	1	0	5	1	6
Kettering	4	3	1	0	6	3	6
Portsmouth	4	3	1	0	6	3	6
Southampton.....	3	2	0	1	8	1	5
Tottenham Hotspur.....	3	2	0	1	5	1	5
New Brompton.....	4	1	1	2	6	4	4
Northampton.....	4	2	2	0	7	8	4
Watford	4	2	2	0	5	7	4
Swindon	4	1	2	1	3	6	3
Wellingborough	4	1	3	0	5	9	2
Brentford	4	0	3	1	1	6	1
Millwall	4	0	4	0	4	9	0
Bristol Rovers	4	0	4	0	1	11	0
Queen's Park Rangers...	3	0	3	0	0	4	0

In consequence of the presentation of medals on the West Ward Recreation Ground, the kick-off in the Cup-tie on Saturday will not take place until 4.15. This will allow people to have their fill of the military spectacle, and then go to the football match.

On Monday, Kettering will pay Luton a visit for a friendly. This is the first of home-and-home matches which have been arranged with the Ketts, and the gates of which are to be pooled. For Monday's game, Brown will be given a rest, and Barker will take his place at centre, while R. Hawkes, who has been rendering such a good account of himself with the Reserves, will appear at left-half. Kick-off four o'clock.

Now I have been asked to touch upon a very important but delicate question, namely, that of money. The Club wants money, and wants it badly. The close season fund, as readers are doubtless aware, did not realise all that was expected, and this, of course, added to the difficulties of the situation when active operations commenced.

The suggestion has therefore been made that Nov. 9th, the date upon which Southampton are due to visit Luton, should be set apart as a Club benefit, that the admission should then be raised to a shilling, and that tickets should at once be issued at that price. These tickets could be taken up and pushed by supporters of the Club, and a really strenuous effort be put forth to make the gate on that occasion one that would help the Club over the stile, and put it on a firm footing for the rest of the season.

A shilling would not hurt anybody, and a large

A shilling would not hurt anybody, and a large number of shillings would materially assist at a critical period of the Club's history. During the next few weeks there will be a lot of money going out and very little coming in, for not until the visit of the Queen's Park Rangers on the 26th October is there any prospect of a decent gate.

Two years ago, when advantage was taken of Woolwich Arsenal's presence to charge a shilling for admission, just over two hundred pounds was realised, and there seems to be no reason why, with a very strong and united effort, that should not be exceeded on Nov. 9th. But in order to do that, there must be unity and enthusiasm, and the directors are anxious to know if they can depend upon that.

At a time when a few private individuals are subscribing five hundred pounds to liquidate one of the Club's old debts, there ought not to be any unwillingness on the part of the general public to make just a little sacrifice for the sake of the game and the credit of the town. Now, I should like to hear what readers have to say on the question. Is it to be a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, with the success which would be bound to follow, or is it to be carping criticism, division, and weakness, with results that may be anything but satisfactory?

I put the alternatives very plainly, because the balance-sheet for last year, now in the hands of the shareholders, shows that there was a considerable loss on the twelve months' working, and the gentlemen who have kept the thing going for so long are very properly of opinion that the limit has been reached, and that they can no longer go on dipping their hands into their pockets in order to make up deficiencies, either large or small, as the case may be. The matter, therefore, is entirely in the hands of the people who derive a good deal of pleasure from witnessing the matches played under the Club's auspices.

Another way in which the Club may be helped is by extending a more liberal patronage to the Reserve matches. The gate on Saturday was £11, and though this was about double the usual, it was not half what the game merited. Some of the football provided during the hour and a half was of a very high order, and far superior to many displays given in the First Division of the Southern League. Each of these South-Eastern League matches ought to attract a gate of at least £20.

I notice that a Brentford scribe speaks of the match last Saturday as "the finest game ever seen on the Brentford ground." If the people there are so satisfied, I suppose we ought not to grumble.

It is reported that Coupar, late of Swindon and formerly of Luton, has gone to Newton Heath. If memory serve me rightly, Jimmy has previously done duty with the Heathens.

Blundell Bros.' F.C. have dates open; Wednesdays only. Apply to Secretary, E. Day, 14, George-street, Luton.—[ADVT.]

Twenty-three entries have been received for the Beds Cup and the preliminary rounds have been fixed for Nov. 16th, Dec. 14th, and Jan. 4th. The draw will be made on Tuesday night next. More teams than usual from the north of the county have entered the competition this year.