



SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON TOWN v. BRENTFORD.

A LUCKY DRAW.

The visit of the Middlesex club to Luton on Saturday for the return match in the above League had been looked forward to with interest, chiefly on account of the good form recently displayed by the visitors. The latest performance of the team was the draw effected with Kettering in the previous week, but it was hardly expected that they would gain a point from Luton on Saturday.

Owing to injuries and various other causes, Luton were not at full strength, Tierney and F. Hawkes being absentees, their places being taken by Holdstock, who was making his first appearance in a Southern League match since the beginning of the season, and R. Hawkes filled Tierney's place at inside left. For the visitors, Harris played in place of Andrews; otherwise they were at full strength. The weather was very dull and threatening, but fortunately the rain held off, until close on the finish, and almost 2,000 spectators were present when the referee, Mr. J. W. Bailey, of Leicester, whistled the following 22 into order:

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Holdstock, White and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, R. Hawkes and Colvin.

Brentford: Spicer; Gilmour and Robson; McEleny, Regan and Stormont; Grieve, Jury, Logan, Harris and Shanks.

Luton won the toss, and Logan kicked off against the wind. The visitors were the first to attack, and some smart exchanges took place in front of the home goal, but danger was averted. Luton then got down, but Robson cleared, and the Brentford forwards pressed. Jury shot at long range, Ord ran out to clear, but was only partially successful and Regan let drive with a fine shot, and Sharp knocked the ball over the bar with his hands. Of course, the referee awarded Brentford a penalty, from which Regan scored the first goal. Ord, although he saved the first kick, failed to recover himself in time to save the return shot. Thus, after 10 minutes' play, the visitors were one goal to the good.

Their success cheered the visitors considerably. Yet Luton played in a very leisurely sort of way and appeared to take their opponents too cheaply. Luton forced two fruitless corners, and a good chance of equalising was lost by offside against Durrant, while Spicer gave a futile corner to a good shot from Hawkes. Ord had to clear from Shanks, and Spicer saved grandly from Blessington at the expense of a corner, which was futile. The interval was fast approaching, and Luton made desperate efforts to draw level, but all their attacks were baffled by the visitors' defence. Half-time arrived with the score:—

Brentford 1, Luton 0.

On resuming, Luton at once set up a strong attack. Spicer saved smartly from Brown, and Durrant skimmed the bar with a good shot. The Brentford goal had some narrow escapes, for the shots came from all quarters. The referee had to caution Grieve for rough play, and a little later he had to speak to Brown and Regan. Spicer made two grand saves from Durrant, and got hurt in the second attempt, but he soon resumed. Two "frees" to Luton were futile, and Blessington had hard lines with a fine shot, which just grazed the bar.

A little later Blessington missed by inches converting a centre from Williams. The visitors took a corner, but Luton cleared, and Hawkes and Durrant each shot hard at the other end. Spicer gave two corners to good attempts by the home forwards, but nothing resulted. However, when everyone thought that Luton had lost the day, a free-kick was awarded for a foul on Colvin by Gilmour, and from Lindsay's place-kick, McEleny had the misfortune to kick through his own goal, and thus equalised the scores. Both teams played for all they were worth after this, but the match ended:

Luton, 1 goal; Brentford, 1.

NOTES.

It was not a very exciting game, albeit the result hung in the balance right up to the finish. All things considered, Luton were rather fortunate in escaping with a draw, though they have only the faulty shooting of their forwards to blame for this. Brentford are certainly to be congratulated on the plucky fight they made. Another mistake of the Luton team was the shifting about of the eleven, Blessington and Hawkes changing places twice during the game, and Holdstock came from right to centre-half after the interval.

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Taking the home team first, Ord did all that was required of him with the exception of the slip he made in the first half, which cost his side a goal. Lindsay was not so effective as usual at back, but, nevertheless, he made some fine clearances at time. Sharp played a splendid game, and tackled and cleared fearlessly all through. He was certainly the better back on Saturday's display, and made only one mistake. As a pair, the Luton backs compared very favourably with the Brentford pair, but had nothing like so much to do.

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In the half-back line, Williams played a hard, untiring game throughout, though he had a very smart wing opposed to him. White showed up well, especially after the interval when he changed places with Holdstock. The latter at times appeared loth to dash in and clear as of old for fear of damaging his leg again. Yet he played a useful game, and made some pretty touches to his forwards at times, of which, however, they failed to take advantage. Providing he does not get hurt again, Holdstock should prove a valuable acquisition to the Luton team during the rest of the season.

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The Luton forwards all appeared to be at sea until the latter portion of the game, when they tried to retrieve their lost ground, and found it was too late. Brown was very weak in the centre, and his efforts rarely succeeded. Blessington tried very hard, but was inclined to do a little too much "on his own." Durrant was fairly good, and Bob Hawkes got through a lot of effective work, though he failed in his final efforts. Colvin was not at his best, and should centre a little quicker instead of taking the ball to the corner flag. The sooner the Luton forwards don their shooting boots, the better it will be for all concerned.

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Most of the credit of Brentford's success was due to Spicer, the goal-keeper. At times, he made some miraculous saves. He was ably assisted by his backs, who kicked and tackled with great precision. The old Millwall man, Robson, was slightly the superior of his partner, but Gilmour, who hails from Woolwich Arsenal, had a tendency to too much vigour.

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Regan, the old Sheffield Wednesday and Millwall man, showed up finely at centre-half, and never seemed to tire. He seldom gave Brown much chance of shining. His partners, McEleney, late of Swindon, and Stormont, who comes from Tottenham, both did a great deal of effective work, but they still have much to learn in the art of feeding their forwards.

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Brentford have a very smart and nimble line of forwards. Logan, the old Woolwich centre, played a fair game, but White generally got the better of him. Jury and Grieve form a very good wing, who want some stopping, while the best of the five was Shanks on the extreme left, who made some fine runs and centres. He found in Lindsay, however, a tough opponent,

and towards the close gave up trying to beat him. Harris was fair, but lacks experience. On the whole, the Brentford front rank created a very favourable impression among the crowd.

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The referee was very fair to both sides, and gave general satisfaction to spectators and players alike. The behaviour of the crowd was all that could be desired. Up-to-date, Luton hold a very creditable position in the Southern League table, and stand 6th with 18 points to their credit for 14 games, of which 7 have been won, 3 have been lost, while the remaining 4 have been drawn. Our goal-average, however, is not what it ought to be — only 18 goals standing to our credit, while 14 have been registered against us.

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To-morrow (Saturday) Luton are without a League match, but the return "friendly" with our old rivals at Kettering will be played. It will be remembered that Luton won the match at Luton with ease by 3 goals to nil, while the teams met at Kettering on Christmas Day in the League, when a draw of 2 goals each resulted. A good game should again be seen, and should Luton lose, it will not be a great disappointment.