

The Southern League.

LUTON v. BRENTFORD.

Played at Griffin Park on Saturday. Result:

Brentford 3 goals.

Luton nil.

The teams turned out as under:—

Luton—Lindsay; Turner and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and Pritchard; Lamberton, R. Hawkes, Hunt, Ross, and Barnes.

Brentford — Whittaker; Watson and Howarth; Jay, Parsonage, and Tomlinson; Warrington, Walker, Hobson, Shanks, and Underwood.

Referee, Q.M.S. Barrow (Chatham).

The directors decided to make no change in the team so successful against Portsmouth, and hopes were pretty high that a turn in the tide had set in. But, unfortunately, as the result above shows, the attack fell back to its former ineffective style and the first Southern League goal away from Dunstable-road has still to materialise. It appears to be Luton's luck this season to meet opponents just as they have got into their stride, and although at the start of the season Brentford were in an even lower position than Luton, they have given evidence of a recovery recently, as the win at West Ham on the Monday previous shows.

The weather conditions were wonderful for November, and a crowd of fully 6,000 spectators welcomed the teams as they came into the arena. Brentford won the toss, but there was really nothing in the advantage gained. The first incident of importance was a burst through on the part of Warrington, who passed right across to Underwood. The local outside-left put in a shot which Lindsay saved at the expense of a corner. This, however, was placed behind. Just afterwards, during a hot attack, Turner used his weight to good advantage, flooring a couple of the "Bees'" forwards only a few yards out.

It was now Luton's turn to have a hand in aggressive work. Barnes, taking the ball from Pritchard, came down the field in good style and centred right in the mouth of goal, but his comrades were not sufficiently up and the chance went begging. Keeping up the pressure, Whittaker had to keep his eyes open. Eventually White got in a decent shot, but it was scarcely so swift as his fine shot of the previous Saturday, and Whittaker had little difficulty in saving.

The game was just about ten minutes old when, following some midfield york, White, in leading away a drive from the left wing, turned the ball in the direction of Warrington, who was standing all alone at the moment. The Brentford winger naturally got away down the field and put across at a sharp pace. I thought Hobson would have a pop, but he allowed the ball to travel a bit farther to the left and Shanks applied his head, and behold the ball was in the net. There was a decided element of luck in this point, but it meant Luton were always playing an uphill game, and truth to tell, they never appeared likely to turn the tables.

One of the few artistic movements during the match arose when White cleverly gave the ball to Ross all along the ground. The latter turned it over to Barnes, who took it well down the field before he centred. Bob Hawkes could not quite gather, and it travelled over to Lamberton who put in a nice attempt, but it was just a trifle too wide, and only a goal kick resulted. Some further attacking on the part of Luton's left wing caused a corner, but although Barnes placed nicely, the home defence got the ball away.

As a rule it was a result of left wing work if the ball was got anywhere near Whittaker, but probably the closest shave came from the opposite pair. Bob after working his way through, passed the ball back to Lamberton, and the latter put in what was undoubtedly the finest shot up to this point. But the direction was just a little wide and the ball passed over the goal line the wrong side of the upright. From a free kick some thirty yards out, White passed the ball over to Bob Hawkes, who was fairly well placed, but Bob got his toe too far under, and the ball sailed harmlessly over. Two further corners fell to Luton without taking effect.

Barnes completely beat Watson, but before he could again settle on the ball Howarth came to the rescue and kicked it well down the field. For several minutes Luton certainly were putting on the severest pressure, but they were a long way behind their form as against Portsmouth in shooting practice, and it was seldom Whittaker was found any work. With the game some 22 minutes old a breakaway on the part of Underwood changed the sphere of operations and indirectly led up to a further goal to Brentford. It was Shanks who again put the ball through, and I must congratulate the Brentford directors on possessing such a grand shot. Scarcely anyone was prepared for it, for Shanks was quite thirty yards away from Lindsay with several Lutonians between him and the goal, but he took deliberate aim and drove the ball home at a terrific pace with a beautiful cross shot.

From this point to the interval the home side certainly had the advantage. Once it looked likely they would still further increase the lead, for McEwen just failed to hold Hobson, who was well placed, but Lindsay brought off a fine save—one of the few he was asked to tackle during the game, for he was not at all overworked during the ninety minutes. Nothing further of importance happened up to half-time, and the team retired for refreshments, with Brentford holding a rather undeserved lead of a couple of goals.

As our right wing had scarcely got along together as it was hoped, McEwen made an exchange of positions between Hunt and Lamberton with a view to increasing the combination. Hunt certainly was quite as effective on the outside as he had been in the centre, while, of course, Lamberton was given more opportunities to get the ball. Any way, the change worked promisingly when Hunt came away from his opponent with the ball well down the field. He touched the ball inside to Bob Hawkes, but it came rather awkwardly, and he could not get in one of his specials.

A minute or so later Bob succeeded in getting his toe to the ball in his well-known manner. It appeared a certain goal all the way, for Whittaker was at the opposite side of his charge, but in some miraculous way he pounced upon the ball and gave a corner, greatly to the relief of the crowd. For some minutes the home defence was hard pressed, but the final attempts, with the above-named exception, were scarcely convincing. From a free kick Ross tried an overhead shot, but again only a corner resulted. Hereabouts Luton had extremely hard luck when another grand shot from Bob Hawkes struck the upright with a thud and rebounded into play. Whittaker had no idea where the ball was, but apparently fate was against the visitors and danger passed.

Midway in the concluding half Shanks made his individual score into three by a solo effort from near the halfway line. He came through in irresistible style and quite nonplussed the Luton defenders. Although Turner certainly made an attempt to intercept his career, he was left standing, and Shanks took his shot while quite twenty yards away from Lindsay. He made no mistake, and Luton's goalkeeper was perfectly helpless, for the ball came at a tremendous pace. To perform the "hat trick" in a Southern League match is a novel event, and the crowd literally danced with delight, "Good old Shanks" being repeated with gusto time after time.

Of course, there was really little chance of retrieving matters with the game at such an advanced stage, but Luton were now playing better together, and gallantly stuck to the task of beating Whittaker. Apparently White has improved in marksmanship, at least in elevation, for he put in a fine cross drive during this period which only missed the post by inches, but Luton's luck was dead out. Several corners were forced as time drew near but either they were met by Whittaker himself or were badly placed and were easily got away. Thus the game finished without a goal standing to the credit of the Lutonians, while Shanks' three had been booked for Brentford.

It could not be called a clever exhibition of football by any means, for there was far too much wild kicking, while the attack was too individual in character on both sides. Ross and Barnes were undoubtedly the best wing on the field in the finer points of the game, but the

first-named was not so much on the target as usual and seldom got in a dangerous shot. On the opposite side of the field Lamberton and Bob Hawkes were undoubtedly equally clever, but they did not play together so well and thus were not so effective. It had been hoped Hunt would have improved in pace as a result of a further week's training, but he failed to come up to expectations.

Luton's halves proved equal to their task in holding in check their opponents, always excepting Shanks on the three occasions he was specially in evidence. McEwen was the better of the two backs, Turner being scarcely so happy in tackling Underwood as the previous week in dealing with Steve Smith. In goal, Lindsay had really little to do, and was certainly not to blame for the defeat, as he had no chance with either goal which Shanks netted.

For Brentford, on the other hand, Whittaker had far more shots to deal with, but with the single exception of a grounder from Bob Hawkes he had nothing difficult. I was not particularly impressed with Watson and Howarth, but Parsonage proved a tower of strength at half-back, while his comrades on either side proved extremely difficult customers to beat. The "Bees'" attack chiefly consisted of long passes to the extreme wings, and Warrington and Underwood were certainly the most prominent players in this division for midfield work. Walker was scarcely seen, and the same can be said of Shanks except when he was popping the ball through. Hobson made a fair centre, but cannot by any stretch of imagination be called clever, chiefly depending upon his weight to force the game.

In the other Southern League games the most surprising results were those achieved at Southampton and Plymouth, the Saints being beaten by Reading by 2 goals to nil, while Watford effected a goalless draw with the Argyle. West Ham and Fulham made a draw, and they are now running neck-and-neck for the honour of being champion drawists of the League.

The following is the table up to date:—

	Goals.						
	Plyd.	Wn.	Dn.	Lt.	For.	Agst.	P.
Reading	9	8	0	1	21	11	16
Bristol Rovers	10	6	3	1	19	6	15
West Ham United	11	4	5	2	15	9	11
Northampton.....	8	6	0	2	12	10	12
Plymouth Argyle.....	15	5	2	3	18	10	12
Southampton.....	10	4	4	2	13	12	12
New Brompton.....	10	3	4	3	15	14	10
Portsmouth	9	5	0	4	21	20	10
Queen's Park Rangers...	10	4	2	4	15	17	11
Fulham	10	2	5	3	6	7	9
Brighton and Hove.....	9	3	2	4	14	8	8
Tottenham Hotspur.....	9	3	2	4	8	10	8
Brentford	10	3	2	5	12	12	8
Swindon	10	4	0	6	13	15	8
Watford	8	3	1	4	7	7	7
Millwall	11	2	3	6	7	19	7
Luton	10	2	1	7	8	18	5
Wellingborough	8	1	0	7	4	25	2

I understand Wallace has left Luton, having accepted a free transfer.

Mr. Stanley Spencer, who has come into Luton from the North to manage a business in Bute-street, has signed all necessary forms to make him eligible to play for Luton both in League matches and cup-ties. He comes with the reputation of being the best amateur centre-forward in Lancashire, and ought therefore to be of great service.

On Saturday next Luton will be at home to their old friends, the Queen's Park Rangers, and the team will comprise—Lindsay; Turner and McEwen; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Lamberton, Hunt, Ross, and Barnes. The Red Cross Band have kindly volunteered to play at the match, though they will not be able to participate in the collection, which will go towards the new ground fund.