

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BRENTFORD.

At last Luton have broken the chain of bad luck by winning on Saturday from Brentford. We have been without a Southern League fixture on the Bury Park since the third week in January, when we lost to Plymouth to the tune of 2 goals to love; and though there was a fairish gate on Saturday of between two and three thousand, it was anticipated that after such a long interval there would be a great crowd.

Those who witnessed the match must have been pleased, not so much with the final result—though that was gratifying—as with the character of the play. Excluding perhaps a couple of matches, that with Southampton in particular, there has not been a more enjoyable game played on the Bury Park this season than that with Brentford on Saturday.

While aware that on form Luton deserved a higher position amongst the Southern League clubs—their luck being the deadly factor against them—we were also aware that Brentford had suffered very much from the same complaint. It may also be conceded that Brentford reckon themselves our equals. Indeed we know that from experience, for when we played them this season on their own ground we lost 3-0, while in a friendly the score was 4-2 against us.

The visiting team included: Whittaker (goal), Watson and Howarth (backs), Jay, Parsonage, and Tomlinson (halves), and Warrington, Fletcher, Moulder, Hobson and C. Duffy. As to Luton's side there was but one alteration from the usual players, Pritchard taking the place of Bob Hawkes.

The visitors were without Shanks, and we were all curious to see how Duffy, their new amateur, would shine.

The turf was very slippery, and before the game had concluded the ground was a quagmire. Luton kicked towards the railway goal, and in the first minute Lamberton tested Whittaker, but play went to the other end, where Warrington was conspicuous. Then McEwen got hurt, but fortunately hostilities only ceased for a moment. At the railway end, Eaton sent in "a beauty," and the visiting custodian had to fist out sharply. Luton were now pressing vigorously, the shooting of Lamberton being a feature, but the only result was a couple of fruitless corners. At the other end, when in a good position, Fletcher shot high over the bar.

At length Luton reaped the reward for their labours. Ross got clean away, and shot for goal. This brought Whittaker to the ground, and though he stopped the shot, he failed to get the leather away, and Eaton coming up nicely passed to Lamberton, who beat the goalkeeper before he had recovered.

The next point of interest took place at the farm goal, when Luton had what must be regarded as the luckiest let-off of the season. Hobson gave Lindsay a real "teaser." In endeavouring to clear, Lindsay miscalculated the ball, and it struck the upright, and it was the greatest piece of luck that the leather came back to him, when he succeeded in getting it away. The spectators gave a sigh of relief when they saw that all danger had been averted. Whittaker made a magnificent save from a "free" shortly afterwards.

Nothing further was scored during the first half, and the teams crossed over with Luton leading by one goal to love.

The second half was very much a duplicate of the first, excepting that no goals were scored. There was the same vigorous style of play on both sides, and the fact that the second moiety proved blank was a tribute to the excellent defence of both teams. The visitors had rather more of the game than when they kicked up the incline, and for 20 minutes were all over Luton. They really deserved a goal, but on the other hand, though there was not a great deal in it, victory went to the side that most worthily deserved it.

Result: Luton, 1; Brentford 0.

For Luton, White played a really good game. From the very start it could be seen that the centre half was "on song," and he maintained his form up to the end. He was, however, guilty of his old trick of jumping and pushing in the back, and was penalised for it a number of times. It is a pity that what was otherwise a meritorious performance should be spoiled by such useless fouls. F. Hawkes, as our most consistent player, was a tower of strength to the right defence. Pritchard played a good game, and I still think he is our best left half. He may not wander all over the field, but when his assistance is required by "Mac," it is always forthcoming. The forwards played a dashing game. Watson, however, kept a keen eye on Barnes. Ross did not seem quite so keen on the ball as usual. Eaton struggled hard all through. The home defence was excellent, though McEwen found a hard nut to crack in Warrington, while Duffy stuck to Turner like a leech.