

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. BRENTFORD.

played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—
 BRENTFORD 2 goals
 LUTON 0 goals

Luton: Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Warner, McDonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Brentwood: Whittaker; Riley and Howarth; Tomlinson, Parsonage, and Jay; Underwood, Hobson, Corbett, Shanks, and Hartley.

Referee:—Mr. H. Smith, Boston.

The weather was threatening, so that there was only an attendance of about 5,000 people. The ground was muddy, heavy and slippery, which promised to spoil play. "Bob" Hawkes won the toss and set Brentford to kick off against the wind. Luton at once got away, and Riley was forced to kick out in clearing. A cleverly-placed corner by Warner found "Sandy" Brown's head conveniently placed, but the ball bounced from it behind.

The Bees had not settled down to steady work and the opening few minutes were all in favour of the homesters. A capital centre by Barnes landed only a few inches in front of Whittaker, when Riley's safe kicking put the finish on to a promising piece of work. Luton were having the better of the game, and appearances pointed to a victory for them, but, alas, the greasy condition of the ground began to have its effect upon a team which is best suited by a hard, dry pitch.

Brentford opened their aggressive movements with a weak run which found Hartley rank off-side. A miss-kick by White let them in again, and sharpshooter Shanks tried his skill in an attempt which sent the ball just past the post. The visitors made the most of their opportunities, and during the whole of a short spell of attacking work were always dangerous.

McDonald put paid to another of Luton's accounts by a weak attempt which placed the leather on the wrong side of the post. Up to this point Luton had shown a superiority in before-goal tactics, which augured defeat for their opponents, but the Bees were merely biding their time, and a clever bit of play on their part put a different complexion on matters. A splendid centre by Underwood was punched away by Platt, and being hotly returned by Shanks was neatly saved again.

Luton attempted their popular passing movement from wing to wing, and for a minute this caused dismay in the ranks of the baffled Bees, but Pickering slipped in front of goal with the ball at his feet, and when he recovered the ball was far out of his reach. The home team were playing in close order, but this method was entirely unsuitable to the prevailing conditions and sooner or later was sure to bring about defeat from the visitors, who were playing just the vigorous open game suitable to the circumstances.

They pressed dangerously and played well together in contrast to Luton's movements, none of which progressed as they were intended to do. Platt had to run out and kick away twice in succession, and a minute later saved a capital attempt from Hobson. But the latter player was not to be denied, and after a moment of hesitation near the Luton goal put in a fine cross-shot which gave the home custodian no chance, but landed in the net.

This reverse, together with the state of the turf seemed to take the heart out of the Luton players, but "Bob" Hawkes was undaunted, and twice essayed to place his team on level terms with their adversaries. His first shot rolled behind, but the second went high over. Barnes ran through well and tried a centre, which found only Riley waiting to receive. Howarth brought Pickering down in the penalty area, and the crowd immediately appealed to the referee for the usual punishment. To their surprise and disgust he refused even a free-kick. A flag-kick by Barnes shot across the goal-mouth only a few inches in front of the posts, but as luck would have it none of the waiting heads could reach it, and Brentford were able to claim a lead of 1—0 at the interval.

In the first few minutes of the second half Luton forced a corner, but White kicked wide. Barnes got up in promising fashion, but took the ball so far that he left himself no room to centre and struck the side of the net. Brentford made their way to the other end, where Underwood middled in clever style, only to see a good chance go a-begging. Shanks, in an attempt which deserved a better fate, sent the ball flying across the goal-mouth behind.

Warner woke up to a sense of his responsibility and endeavoured to place his side on an equal footing with their opponents by a single-handed effort which was frustrated more by luck than judgment. Such undecided efforts as this seemed to be all that the homesters could spur themselves up to. Despite the fact that playing in close order proved so ineffective, they made no change in their tactics, and so seldom looked dangerous that some of the spectators began to address remarks the reverse of complimentary to them.

On one occasion, however, they showed a glimpse of their real form when, after a minute of pressure, McDonald essayed a shot which Whittaker stopped against the cross-bar, but "muffed," and it appeared as though the ball went inside the goal, but to the disgust of the crowd the referee would not allow the point.

The Bees put in some more determined work, and Platt had to rush out in order to clear. A moment later he was called upon to save a very hard drive. Brentford maintained their pressure, but Platt was well on the alert, and, leaving nothing to chance, dashed out once more and safely cleared. But the visitors were not to be denied and returned to the attack. Their efforts were rewarded by the scoring of the second goal somewhat unexpectedly by a shot just inside the post by Corbett.

Blackett placed a free-kick in ideal fashion for Warner, who shot well, but the ball was tipped over the cross-bar by the goalie. Brown, who on occasions showed a disposition to work harder than he has done in the last few matches, bored his way through the defence, but just as he was nearing goal was brought to a standstill in rather suspicious fashion. Again, Mr. Smith, ignored the infringement. The end arrived with Brentford leading by 2—0.

The referee's decisions were often unsatisfactory, and at the close he met with a slightly hostile demonstration from the crowd.

The winners deserved their victory. They played a game which was entirely suitable to the existing conditions, while Luton failed to adapt their methods to the heavy going. They were certainly below par, and their exhibition was dispirited. Hardly any of the players put any life into the game, and all seemed out of fettle. McDonald was, as usual, very hard-working. The Brentford defence was on occasions very lucky, but all too often the Lutonians fed their opponents through bad judgment in the matter of passing.