

Southern League.

BRENTFORD v. LUTON.

Played at Brentford on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Brentford	nil.

The teams were as under:—

Luton—Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and Jones; Warner, Gittins, Brown, Fitzpatrick, and Barnes.

Brentford—Williams; Watson and Taylor; Jay, Parsonage, and Tomlinson; Pentland, Hagan, Greaves, McAllister, and Underwood.

Referee, Mr. A. W. McQue (London).

Luton's task on Saturday was certainly a formidable one on paper, for Brentford were the only team in the Southern League with an undefeated home record. Both sides were practically at full strength, for although R. Hawkes was unable to make the journey, Jones can now scarcely be looked upon as a reserve, while Greaves at the start of the season was a regular member of the Bees' attack, although Corbett has been acting as pivot in recent matches.

McCurdy won the toss, but this was of no practical advantage, inasmuch as there was little wind about and certainly no sun. As a matter of fact, the surroundings were dull in the extreme, and it was reported to be the smallest Saturday gate of the present season. The meagre attendance, however, was due to counter attractions in town, notably the charity match near by at Craven Cottage.

The game commenced with the Bees attacking in force, but they could not drive home the advantages gained in midfield. It was a near thing, however, when Hagan dashed down with the ball in a dangerous way, Greaves eventually putting in a shot which it took all Platt's time to prevent scoring, but Peter just managed to keep it out, and White had to give a corner, which was easily cleared. It appeared all over a few minutes later when, during a hot attack, Platt dashed out to Greaves and did not get the ball away. McCurdy fell back into goal, and it was fortunate for Luton's chances that he did, for otherwise a goal must have resulted. As it was, McCurdy kicked the ball from practically under the bar in fine style.

To give an idea of the way the game was going, I have only to mention that Sandy was just about this period given offside when not more than thirty yards away from his own goal. By the way, this was not the only occasion by at least half a score that a Luton forward was offside in his own half of the field during the game.

In the opening quarter of an hour almost the only time Luton became dangerous was the result of a splendidly-judged pass which Fitzpatrick gave to Brown, and Luton's centre tricking Watson in fine style, sent in a good attempt, but just a trifle too high, and nothing better than a goal kick for Brentford resulted.

Midway in the first half Luton made two or three promising attempts to change the scene of operations, and indeed on one occasion all but succeeded in notching a goal. Fitzpatrick worked the ball across to almost an inside-right position and let drive with a shot which Williams could not hold. Indeed, it appeared likely to beat him all the way, but he just managed to punch the ball on to the nearest upright, and it rebounded right along the line to the opposite end of the goal. Barnes made a dash to get in a shot, but unfortunately by this time the ball was really over the line and out of play, and he could only strike the side of the net.

The game was twenty-five minutes old when a right-wing attack on the part of Luton culminated in a Brentford player making a miskick, and the ball went out to Barnes, who put across a centre which hit Watson on the arm, and he tried to prevent it travelling any nearer the goal by knocking it down. Amid a silence that could almost be felt the referee pointed at once to the penalty spot, and Jones advanced to take the kick. He made no mistake this time, for although Williams managed to touch the ball, he was powerless to prevent it passing into the goal, and as events turned out the match was lost to Brentford. At this stage I do not think anyone on the ground realised that a record had been made; certainly not the Brentford supporters, for the home players had had decidedly the better of the game so far as pressing was concerned.

Still, as the interval came without any alteration in the score, Luton set themselves the task of keeping what they held, and in the second half improved to a great extent on their display in the opening "45." Within five minutes of the restart a corner was forced which Warner placed nicely, and Jones just missed the goal by inches only. Still, it was at the opposite end that most of the play took place, and Platt was pretty busy keeping out shots which, but for his alertness, would have meant goals. It was evidently Luton's lucky day, for following a fine centre by Underwood, Greaves had a glorious chance, but missed the target altogether.

A clever run by Warner and Gittins shifted the scene of operations, and although the first attack was repelled, the ball came back to White, who made a gallant attempt to increase the lead with a dropping shot which fell about a foot over the bar on the top of the net. By this time the Luton defence adopted kicking-out tactics, much to the chagrin of the crowd, but the course was quite justified in the result, for nothing further was done, and the players trooped off the field without a cheer.

This makes Luton's fourth Southern League win away from home, and each time it has been the only goal scored in the match that brought the two points. It is a curious circumstance that in the six matches which have resulted in Luton's ten away points only four goals have been scored in all.

The game could not be classed as a great one by any means, but Luton certainly put more heart into their work than the Bees. As the result proves, Luton's defence played a fine game. Platt had about half-a-dozen teasers to deal with, and came out of the ordeal with credit, but the time spent by Brentford in Luton territory should have meant many more difficult shots being put in. Undoubtedly the reason for this scarcity of real chances was the attention given by Hogg and McCurdy, ably seconded by three fine halves.

White played one of his best games of the season, and time after time fell back to tackle when a Brentford forward appeared clean through the backs.



Warner gave no evidence of his recent injury, and although he did not put in many of the brilliant runs he is capable of, undoubtedly strengthened the forward line. For getting the ball down the field, Gittins proved himself Luton's cleverest forward, and appears to have quite recovered from his slackness consequent upon ill-health at the commencement of the season.