

Southern League

BRENTFORD v. LUTON.

Played at Brentford on Saturday. Result:—

Brentford	3 goals.
Luton	1 goal.

The teams were as under:—

Luton—Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; H. Parsons, White, and Jones; Rigate, F. Hawkes, Pearson, Moody, and Rankin.

Brentford—Montgomery; Watson and Clark; Jay, Parsonage, and Tomlinson; Hagan, Corbett, Bowman, McAllister, and Underwood.

Referee, Mr. T. J. Tappin (Canning Town).

In visiting Brentford the Luton players were faced with the fact that no visiting team had been successful on that enclosure this season; but last year Luton were the first to do the trick, and it was hoped history would repeat itself. To fill the vacancy caused by R. Hawkes playing in the Amateur International, H. Parsons was promoted from the Reserves, and was making his initial Southern League appearance, while Rankin was preferred to Walders at outside-left.

Brentford were at full strength bar Brown, who broke down the previous Saturday, both Bowman and Underwood coming back to the side after an absence through injuries. The "gate" was certainly the smallest that has greeted a visit from Luton, the early start and the strong counter-attraction at Chelsea keeping down the attendance to about 4,000.

McCurdy lost the toss, but this mattered little, and during the opening stages Luton appeared likely to make a bold bid for victory. Their first real attack was caused by Pearson opening out the game by sending Rigate away with a well-judged pass. Luton's outside-right sent in a good drive, which, however, touched Clark in its transit goalwards, and a barren corner kick was the result. Subsequently the play was pretty even for several minutes, although Platt brought off a fine save from a long shot from Hagan with Underwood right on the spot. Parsonage also tried his abilities with a thirty yards' attempt, which hit the outside of the net.

Rankin put in a brilliant run, and, beating off all opposition, sent the ball all along the ground direct to Moody, who was standing unmarked with no one but Montgomery to beat. To the spectators it appeared nothing could save the downfall of Brentford's goal, but Moody lifted the ball right over the bar with a wild shot. It was a terrible blunder on Moody's part, for it only needed a goal at this point to encourage the Luton attack, and it might have had a winning influence on the game.

As usual at Griffin Park, Underwood was an extremely slippery customer, and it took Hogg all his time to prevent his getting away. On one occasion Hogg, instead of tackling Underwood, stopped and appealed for offside, not noticing that White had fallen back, and this almost spelt disaster, for the little winger sent in a terrific cross shot which struck the bar with a bang and rebounded to Hagan, who promptly returned, but fortunately his effort was not properly aimed, and Platt's charge had a rather lucky escape.

Just after, Jones caused a stoppage by holding Jay, and from the free kick the Bees were enabled to open the score, for the ball was not got away from the place kick, and Underwood settling on a long pass from Parsonage, drove home the advantage gained with a cross grounder which beat Platt entirely. This was after 25 minutes' play.

Before the interval Luton had a grand chance to equalise, following a good run and centre by

Rigate, but Pearson, who could have walked the ball through, made the mistake of trying a drive, and Montgomery managed to knock the shot down and thus save the situation. Therefore the teams retired for the interval with Luton a goal behind, although they had had two of the easiest chances of the match, as recorded above, and should have been leading if ordinary care had been taken.

Luton's defence was not nearly so reliable as usual, and early in the second half a miskick let in Bowman, but he shot straight at the goalkeeper. Luton were awarded a free kick for hands against Watson, and Jones taking the kick, put the ball well up, but the home defence prevailed, and the game became rather tame in character for a long period. Eventually McAllister managed to work the ball round Hogg in midfield, and he promptly sprinted off, closely followed by Parsons, but the latter was always just a step behind, and McAllister, waiting until Bowman was well placed, cleverly tipped the ball to the home centre-forward, who simply walked it into the net.

Luton continued to hold their own so far as doing an equal share of the pressing, but with their two-goal lead the Bees seemed to be quite content. Jones forced a corner kick, which Rankin placed so well that it took Montgomery all his time to prevent scoring, but he fisted away from under the bar with half the players in a bunch all round him. It really seemed Luton would never manage to get a goal, but a nice pass from White to Moody eventually led up to the last-named giving the ball to Pearson, who worked round Watson and shot by Montgomery with the cleverest goal of the match, it being a well-worked-for point from the moment the ball left White's boot. This happened some twelve minutes before time, and there was just a chance that Luton would yet earn at least one badly-needed point.

But within a couple of minutes this possibility quite faded, for a regular mix-up on the part of Parsons, Hogg, and Platt gave Bowman an absolutely open goal, and he made no mistake. Except that he scored two goals, Bowman was almost useless, being continually offside, but these tactics helped him in the end, for if he had not kept well up he would not have had the chances to net his two goals.

It was not a great game by any means, and very few players increased their reputations. On Luton's side White was the chief figure in defence, the back division not being up to their usual form. H. Parsons played a hard working game and justified his trial, but of course lacked experience in dealing with his opponents at close quarters. As a forward line, undoubtedly Rankin improved matters in many particulars, although it is a moot point if Walders' pace would not have caused more trouble to the home defence, one feature of Walders' play being that the ball is kept continually on the move. Rigate and F. Hawkes were the better wing in the first half, but in the second portion the ball seldom came their way, and as a combination Luton's attack suffered.