

Southern League.

LUTON v. BRENTFORD.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton 1 goal.

Brentford nil.

Teams:—

Luton—Platt; Dimmock and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Rigate, Rankin, Pearson, Moody, and Latheron.

Brentford—Williams; Watson and Clark; Jay, Tomlinson, and McAllister; Brown, Parsonage, Bowman, Corbett, and Underwood.

Referee, Mr. G. H. Muir.

The football season is fast drawing to a close, and as the weeks go by, Luton's chance of steering clear of the bottom two clubs in the Southern League grows brighter. They have gained five points in the last three matches, and are now fourth from the bottom. The danger is not altogether past yet, for four of the remaining six matches are to be played away from home.

Luton are the poorest goal-scorers in the League, and they seem likely to remain so to the end of the season. On Saturday, their superiority over Brentford was not so apparent, perhaps, as against Bradford a fortnight previously. The solitary goal was again the result of a corner, a fact which is not altogether satisfactory. It might have been different if Rigate had not been so anxious to shoot when he ought to have centred. But more of that anon.

For a change, Bob Hawkes won the toss, and Brentford were soon attacking at the far end of the field. Brown, the outside-right, who proved to be quite the smartest forward on the Brentford side, forced a corner, and in the resulting play, McCurdy cleared an almost certain goal while Platt was out. Another corner gave Corbett a fine opening, but Dimmock happened to be in the way of the shot.

This was not good business for Luton, but they soon began to attack. Rigate had a chance of getting in a centre, but dallied, and when he did kick, the ball went behind the goal. F. Hawkes was much more dangerous with a pot shot. Clarke left it to the goal-keeper, who was almost taken by surprise, for the ball bounced up on to the bar, and he had to give a corner.

Brown again becoming prominent, Dimmock did the right thing in kicking out when McCurdy was beaten. F. Hawkes and Jones were also prominent in defence at this period, the former clearing once or twice when the backs were hard pressed. A grounder from Moody was saved by Williams, and Rigate made one or two good attempts. From a corner, Pearson headed through, but the custodian had been fouled, and so the point was not allowed.

Good play by Moody brought about a fast run up the field, and Pearson left the ball to Rigate, who missed a good chance by shooting wide. Another pass out to the right by Moody caused McAllister to give a corner. The kick was well judged by Rigate, and Moody beat Williams with a well-judged header. This happened after twenty minutes' play.

With the wind and rain behind them, Luton had a good share of the play, but the Brentford forwards were ever on the alert, and Platt was not altogether free from trouble. On one occasion he rushed out and just prevented one of the inside men from getting his foot to the ball as it came over from the left. At the other end, Williams brought off an even better save. A centre by Rigate was met by Pearson's head, and he seemed certain to score, but Williams' arm shot out just in time.

Although Rigate had more work to do than Latheron, the plucky outside-left was always on hand when wanted, and distinguished himself by getting across three consecutive centres, although hampered by opponents. With the Brentford defence concentrated, Pearson, Rankin, and Rigate tried shots, but none of them was allowed to reach the goal.

A good shot from Rankin was just saved by Williams, and the ball went out to Moody, whose shot glanced off the Brentford right back, fortunately for the visitors. In the play following the flag-kick, the Brentford centre-half handled, but the referee did not notice it. Neither did Mr. Muir notice a similar infringement by one of the Luton halves a minute later, when the visitors were acting on the aggressive.

Just before the interval, Dimmock mis-kicked, and Brentford's chances were decidedly rosy. The outside-left found himself with only Platt to beat, and he shot hard, but did not beat the goalkeeper. The ball went to the inside-right, but once more Platt was equal to the test, and the resultant corner was cleared.

The lead of one goal to nil left the issue in doubt, for Brentford had the elements in their favour after the interval, but the Luton players showed the spirit of men who were a goal in front and meant to win. And they did. The play continued to be interesting, but the conditions were hardly so nice as might be wished.

Rankin sent the ball over with a long shot, and Latheron put across two centres which were not taken advantage of. Brentford next made the running, and Platt landed the ball over in saving from the outside-right. When Luton came again, Rankin shot, and Tomlinson, the centre-half, fisted the ball. The referee stopped play, and although the offence was committed inside the penalty area, threw the ball down on the line, a course of action which not unnaturally caused the crowd to make comments more pertinent than polite.

Platt brought off two or three good saves after this, Brown still giving a lot of trouble. A free kick for Luton just outside the penalty area caused some of the Brentford men to line up. Perhaps it was fortunate for them that they did, for Jones rushed by the ball, and created some bewilderment, while Pearson took the kick.

Jones took a free kick later on, and Williams gave a corner in saving a header by Moody. After F. Hawkes had tested Williams, Rigate received from the left wing, and his shot went a few inches wide. In the closing stages, a miskick by Dimmock might have upset Luton's calculations. The outside-left passed to the other wing, but his shot was cleared. It was a very near thing, but Luton triumphed to the end.

Altogether, Luton played a very smart game, the only room for fault-finding being the inability of the forwards to score. Moody was easily the best and the most dangerous of the front string, and Rigate was the most ineffective, not because he did not shape well generally, but simply because he kept trying to shoot at goal himself instead of placing the ball in front and giving the inside men a chance. Nothing is more demoralising to an

attack than for an outside man to be continually placing the ball behind in futile attempts to score.

The halves were, as usual, in great form, and the backs also played splendidly. Dimmock showed wonderful improvement, only making about a couple of mistakes during the whole game, whilst many of his clearances were as brilliant as those of his more experienced partner. Platt likewise did practically all that was required of him in goal, though it was fortunate that McCurdy was able to cover him in that first minute when he ran out and failed to get the ball away.

Brentford gave a capital display, and Brown especially made a splendid outside-right. The backs rendered yeoman service to their side, and Williams was pretty safe in goal. He had no chance at all with Moody's header.