

Southern League.

LUTON'S CUP DEFEAT AVENGED.

Brentford Well Beaten

IN SPITE OF TWO GIFT GOALS.

By "Vigilant."

None of Luton Town's hoilday fixtures excited greater interest among the Blues' supporters than the concluding one on Tuesday afternoon, when Brentford were visitors to the Ivy-road enclosure. The incidents of the cup-tie at Brentford are still fresh in the minds of all football followers in Luton, and it was not at all surprising to find, even with the weather so threatening, the largest crowd of the season, there being getting on for 8,000 spectators. It would be difficult to say whether the players or the supporters were keenest on seeing the unfortunate cup-tie defeat avenged, but it is certain all were equally delighted with the completeness with which the operation was performed. It was evident right from the start that the Blues meant business, and, except for the first few minutes of the second half, the result was never in doubt. Two goals always divided the teams after the first quarter of an hour or so of the game, and it is worthy of note that the scorer of these first goals was Smith, who has every reason to remember the previous meeting with Brentford.

In view of the fact that the suspension upon Riley for the foul upon Smith in the cup-tie expired before Christmas there had been considerable speculation as to whether the player would take the field at Luton. The management of the Brentford club determined not to court hostility by such a step, and that their decision was a wise one was very evident from the temper of the crowd. "Where is Riley?" was a cry generally taken up as the visiting eleven took the field, and whenever any of the Brentford players showed any disposition to adopt foul tactics—and several of them were not over particular as to their methods—they were greeted with shouts of "None of your Riley tricks here." The game all through was inclined to be lively, but generally good feeling prevailed, although both players and spectators were sorely tried by the many perplexing decisions of the referee. His ruling on the matter of foul play would not bear examination, and Brentford owed their two goals to palpable errors. No wonder that the whistle holder came in for some barracking when, on no fewer than three occasions, he had to correct obvious mistakes.

Bob Hawkes, who was busily assisting in the preparations for the Football Club bazaar instead of going to Bristol on Boxing Day, returned to the team against the Bees. McCardy, who had been missing from the Christmas matches since the game at Coventry also re-appeared, but Hedley was given another rest with his ankle, and Moody stood down with an injured knee, Johnson taking up the third position he has filled in the team during the holiday matches. The team thus differed in three respects from that which played in the cup-tie at Brentford, Jarvis, Chapman and Johnson being the players who were not utilised on that occasion. The Bees also had three changes. Jay came in at half-back for Riley, and the left-wing pair, Hollinrake and Anderson, were absentees.

The teams which lined out in charge of Mr. R. A. Stephens (London), were:—

Luton—Jarvis; Chapman and McCurdy; Fred Hawkes, Jones and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Johnson and Stansfield.

Brentford—Ling; Rhodes and Buxton; Richards, Hamilton and Jay; Bartlett, McCafferty, Rushton, Reid and Walker.

The spectators were put on the best of terms with themselves by a sensational start. By winning the toss Bob Hawkes gave his side the advantage of an exceedingly strong wind, and a minute and a half sufficed to give the Blues a goal lead. Bob himself led up to the movement with a clever piece of footwork, which enabled the right wing to show off their paces. When the ball returned to the centre it was muddled by Johnson, but Stansfield dashed into the middle and, taking his time, landed in a fine shot just under the bar. Grand goalkeeper though he is, Ling is on the short side, and all he could do was to jump and tip the ball up so as to fust away as it fell. He had not reckoned upon Luton's centre-forward, however. Smith was there like a flash and Ling punched the ball on to his head and it rebounded through, giving the goalie no possible chance. Ling promptly protested that Smith had elbowed the ball through and obstinately insisted on placing it for a goal kick, but the referee was just as obstinate the other way about, and so Luton were inspired by an early lead.

The Bees were within an ace of equalising a couple of minutes later. Bartlett bore down the wing almost to the goal line, and a low centre offered a fine scoring chance to Rushton. Jones and Fred Hawkes were in waiting, however, and by unceremoniously bundling the centre man off the ball Abe enabled Fred to get the leather away. Except at rare intervals the Brentford forwards were inclined to be a trifle slack, and as the game wore on the play rested largely with the Luton halves and forwards and the visitors' defence. It was hard work making headway, for the ground was very heavy and the ball fell like a lump of lead, but, nevertheless, the Blues' front line showed very attractive football. The right wing was simply irresistible, and the crowd yelled with delight at the way in which they made rings round the opposition.

The game was not ten minutes old when Smith had a chance of adding to the score, but before he could get inside the penalty area he was hooked up, amid shouts of "None of your cup-tie tricks, Brentford." The free kick was of no avail, though Smith made a creditable effort to convert a centre from Brown. These two players were directly afterwards associated in a sparkling piece of combination, but Quinn was hooked up before he could shoot, and the homeaters had to be content with a corner. Three others followed in quick succes-

sion without result and then Smith, who was being freely plied with centres from the right headed in for Ling to fist away in particularly smart style. Bob Hawkes returned a hot shot, but Ling was not to be caught napping.

The goalkeeper did not come out of the next ordeal so successfully. Stansfield was permitted to break clean through on the left, and his centre landed right in the mouth of the goal. Quinn went for it, but the goalie spoiled his effort, quite as much by luck as by judgment. Brentford were, however, unable to get the ball clear, and in the mix up Smith's handy foot came into operation and put Luton two goals up in seventeen minutes.

As before, Brentford were quick to retaliate, and once more Fred Hawkes came to the rescue of his side. Jarvis saved from Walker, but could do no more than push the ball on to McCafferty, and he would undoubtedly have been beaten by the second shot had not Fred Hawkes dashed up in time to intercept it. The Bees' visit to the Luton goal was this time more prolonged than usual. McCurdy made a series of very bad kicks, and there was a suspicion of hands when he managed to clear, but the referee gave him the benefit of the doubt, and the homesters emerged from a nasty situation on the right side. The danger was not ended, however, and this time it was Jones who barred the way of shots by both the right wingers. Rushton, by the way, had gone lame and was now playing outside right with Bartlett inside, and McCafferty in the centre.

Brown eventually changed the scene of operations with a characteristic run, and Buxton brought off a daring save from his centre, and F. Hawkes snatching up the rebound called upon Ling to put forth his best. A beautifully placed centre by Stansfield gave Brentford a rare fright, the ball passing clean across the goal untouched to Brown, who sent it over the bar. Before the pressure was relieved Luton gained a third goal—a real beauty. Fed by Jones, Johnson sent on to Smith, and the centre-forward gave a square pass to Quinn. Tommy seemed "bottled up," but he tricked the opposing half with marked cleverness, and letting fly with the left foot gave Ling a shot he could only get the tips of his fingers to.

Brentford really ought to have scored after this. A complete miskick by McCurdy enabled the centre-forward to give the outside left a clear opening, but Walker hesitated and allowed himself to be surrounded by Lutonians before he attempted to make use of his chance, with the result that danger was averted. The outside left did better when the next opportunity came to him, and Luton were lucky to survive the onslaught. Walker got clear away and ran to within half-a-dozen yards of the goal before shooting. The ball went straight to Jarvis, and he saved, but Walker regained it and took another shot, which the goalie also stopped. Jarvis was unable to clear the ball, but by this time the backs had come to his rescue, and they came out of a scrimmage with flying colours. Altogether it was a remarkable escape.

A fine shot by Johnson, which passed across the goal and went over the line on the wrong side of the post, and smart saves by Ling from Johnson and Fred Hawkes were the most noteworthy incidents until ten minutes before the change of ends, when Luton had another narrow shave. Once again the danger came from Walker, who sent a lovely centre speeding across the goal for Rushton to reach it a second too late to convert. There was a similar effort by the outside right a minute or two later. This time Reid was splendidly placed for the centre, but just as the ball reached him Jones bundled him out of the way. It was as fair a shoulder charge as one could wish to see and it was startling to find a penalty awarded, especially as a moment before Quinn had been robbed of a certain goal by Rhodes "setting a back" for him in most deliberate fashion. Still, the referee was not to be prevailed upon to alter his ruling, and the Blues' supporters thanked their lucky stars that they possessed a useful lead when Rhodes came up and easily converted the award.

The Blues followed up his incident with a very hot attack, in which the right wing showed up with marked prominence. Brown centred into the goal mouth, and it looked odds on a goal coming from Stansfield, but Ling made a marvellous save while lying full length on the ground. Johnson next set Quinn moving with a gem of a pass, but Tommy's shot was hurried and it suffered accordingly. At the other end McCurdy was fouled by one of the Brentford forwards, and Reid, who was unmarked, netted the ball, but a free kick was awarded. Directly afterwards half-time was signalled with the score:—Luton 3, Brentford 1.

The Blues continued to show the way on the restart, and early on Smith met a centre from Brown beautifully and tested Ling. Brentford were, however, not on the defensive long, and with their forward play improving considerably the Luton defenders were kept on the alert. From a pass of McCafferty's Bartlett gave Jarvis a nasty one just under the bar, and Rushton was responsible for a similar effort. On both occasions Jarvis saved stylishly, but the second shot gave him a good deal of trouble. He seemed to hold the ball on to the upright, and when it fell it was all he could do to touch it away to McCurdy, who had to concede a corner.

Fred Hawkes and Chapman were repeatedly showing up well in repelling the attacks of the visitors, and Jones was most assiduous—so much so that he came under the ban of the referee. What it was for did not appear clear, but Abe evidently did not like it, and the crowd signified their approval of his attitude when he remonstrated. On the Blues relieving the pressure Quinn was fouled close in, and from the free kick Jones gave Johnson a chance, but he was unable to control the ball sufficiently to shoot. Play was soon back to the other end, where Jarvis smartly dealt with a hot shot from Jay, but the visit was a brief one.

A quarter of an hour's play brought Luton a fourth goal, and it was the pick of the bunch. Jones sent the right wing off in fine style, and Brown's centre was smartly trapped by Smith. Unable to get clear himself Jack gave Johnson a square pass, and the latter, though considerably hampered, screwed the ball just inside the further post from what seemed an impossible angle. Directly after Smith was on the job, heading into Ling's hands from Stansfield's centre, but the next item in the goal-scoring line occurred at the other end. For some inexplicable reason the referee awarded a foul against Fred Hawkes, and the outcome of the kick was a centre by Walker, which completely baffled the Luton defence, and enabled Bartlett to score a very easy goal.

The crowd were very angry with the referee about this decision, and they had a good deal of fun at his expense a little later, when he had to correct a couple of errors within a few minutes. For some time the game had shown a distinct falling off, and the last twenty minutes or so were rather uninteresting. The ground had become a regular quagmire, and the players on both sides appeared to tire. Brentford were generally doing rather more of the attacking and Jarvis, flinging himself across the goal, brought off a fine save on the ground from McCafferty. Rushton had a fine centre pass across the goal untouched, and all the efforts of the visitors to score came to naught.

In the last few minutes Smith tested Ling with a beauty, and Jones landed a free kick just over the bar. Smith made another desperate effort for the "hat trick," but although he tried hard to shake off the attentions of his opponents he was eventually forced to go through a somersault performance. Two other shots by Smith lacked sting, but one from Brown was a beauty, and although Ling kept it out it was a great relief to Brentford to have Johnson ruled offside. Just before the finish Brentford made a determined attempt to improve matters, but the best they could do was to force a corner, and as "time" was whistled before the kick could be taken the final result was—Luton 4, Brentford 2.

COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

Considering that most of the Luton team were playing their fourth game in five days the team exhibited a freshness that was remarkable. The state of the ground rendered it no easy matter to exhibit good football, but all through the first half the forwards and half-backs showed form which left little to be desired. That they fell off a bit in the latter stages of the game was not surprising, because they were easily ahead of their opponents in the matter of play, and Brentford have only their backs and goalkeeper, not to mention their two gift goals, to thank for minimising the severity of their defeat.

Perhaps the most delightful feature of the game was the cleverness of the right wing, who have never before excelled in so marked a manner. Brown was in his cleverest mood, and Quinn was an excellent second, and the pair of them took a deal of stopping. Often they completely outwitted the majority of the Brentford defenders.

and their display all through was among the best things seen on the ground this season.

Smith was marked out for attention not less persistent than he received in the cup-tie at Brentford, and it speaks well for his resourcefulness that in spite of all he managed to "bag" a couple of goals. Stansfield seemed to be troubled a bit by the heavy ground, as his centres were inclined to be weak. Johnson again proved himself a thoroughly useful handy man. This was his third game during the holidays, and each time he has filled a different position.

The halves were as good as ever, Fred Hawkes frequently showing fine judgment in coming to the rescue of his side. The backs were not as safe as one could wish, and contrasted poorly with Rhodes and Buxton, who played a fine, resolute game throughout. Both goalkeepers gave a very finished display.

Luton journey to Brighton on Saturday, and no one is looking forward to the visit more than Abe Jones, who will be opposing his brother. When Greek meets Greek—but there's no need to say more. It is doubtful whether Hedley and Moody will be fit; if they are not Chapman and Johnson will again play. Bob Hawkes is not a certain starter. He has promised to go to Scotland next Monday to play for the Northern Nomads, and if he fulfils this engagement he will not go to Brighton with the Luton team.