

Southern League.

LUTON v. BRENTFORD.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Brentford	1 goal.

Luton—Naisby; Chapman and Wightman; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and R. M. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Smith, Moody, and Stansfield. Brentford—Ling; Rhodes and Buxton; Richards, Hamilton, and Kennedy; Ryalls, Sibbald, Reid, Hollinrake, and Frost. Referee, Mr. R. Beekley (Chesham).

The weather was very unpleasant on Saturday, rain falling most of the time, but in spite of that there was a very good attendance, the spectators numbering about 5,000. It was the first Southern League match at home since the beginning of November—a period of six weeks.

Naturally, after the heavy and continuous rains, the ground was in a very soft state, and as the game proceeded, the mud in midfield became so churned up that passing the ball or even shooting was at times a very difficult matter, but considering the adverse conditions, the play all through was very good.

Needless to state, Bob lost the toss, and Luton started the game, Smith kicking off towards the Dunstable end goal, from which a fairly strong wind blew right to the Luton end. The beginning of the match was of a sensational character. Two or more attacks by Brentford had been beaten off when the ball was again taken behind. Wightman took the goal kick and struck Reid with the ball. The visitors' centre-forward was in the penalty area, and stopping the ball and steadying himself, he had an easy pot at goal, and though Naisby made an attempt to grab the ball, he could not quite catch it, and Brentford were thus a goal to the good.

It was the softest goal possible. Wightman kicked off well from goal as a rule, and it was a misfortune for him to make such an inauspicious start. It was an expensive mistake, but the crowd and players took it merely as a stroke of bad luck, which it was. The spectators applauded the new back directly afterwards when he tackled the Brentford right wing and dashed in and cleared.

Brentford showed plenty of thrustful methods in the ensuing five minutes, and strangely enough from a cannon they nearly got a second goal, the ball again hitting Reid, who retaliated with a shot at goal, Naisby sending the ball round the post for a fruitless corner. Corner followed corner in rapid succession, but the defence seemed very safe, especially Naisby. The attacking did not come all from the Brentford forwards. Luton, as usual, made the mistake of playing too close a passing game, and on the muddy surface short passing was very unwise.

From a free kick for hands against Buxton, Bob placed the ball neatly to Moody, who headed to Smith, for the latter also to head the ball right across the goal-mouth. It appeared certain to go in, but Ling, by a quick plunge, saved the leather from crossing the line. Many of the spectators at the other end cried "Goal," but those near the Brentford goal saw that Ling had not been beaten. The goalkeeper had no sinicure, for immediately afterwards Fred Hawkes placed the ball into Ling's hands, and the custodian also dashed out to clear an attack by Moody.

The referee considerably aggravated the spectators by pulling the Luton men up for offside. On several occasions there was but a foot or so in it, but the decisions, as seen from the Press box, seemed to be correct. These decisions served a good purpose for Luton, for instead of playing so closely together, long passes were resorted to, and from one of these a successful attack matured.

Quinn passed to his partner, who dashed down the line and swung the ball across. There was a short scramble for it between Moody and Ling, and to the surprise of the latter, Bert got there first, and seemed to catch the ball in his lap. He had nothing to do but to push it forward, and it safely reposed in the net, while the other members of the team duly shook hands with the scorer.

The ball was got into the Brentford net a second time, but offside nullified it. Fred Hawkes, who occasionally dribbled through the defence, shot hard. The ball struck Smith, who deflected it to the other end of the goal, but the referee whistled him offside. Ling, in the next minute, rather foolishly left his foot too long in the air, and it caught Stansfield in the middle of the back, but shortly afterwards Stansfield, as a set-off, knocked down Rhodes a little violently, and the referee awarded Brentford a free kick. At half-time the score stood at one all.

Rain fell freely in the second half of the game, and the field got into a bad state in consequence. A very spirited attack was first made by Luton, and Bob Hawkes tried Ling with a good shot, which he saved well. A minute later it looked any odds on Reid scoring again, as he beat Chapman and dashed

off for goal. The Luton back, fortunately, overhauled him and kicked the ball behind for a useless corner.

Stansfield found Ling a little more employment, but at the other end Brentford were soon hammering away again. They forced a corner, which Frost placed in front, and two or three men endeavoured to put it through, but Wightman made good use of his head and relieved very coolly.

Ling did not mind taking moderate risks. Once in particular he cleared magnificently. Brown centred to Smith, and whilst the latter had the ball at the end of his boot, Ling flung himself down, secured the ball and threw away. Bob also tested Ling from long range, but whether from long or short distances, the Bees' goalkeeper seemed equally at home.

Fortunately for Luton, Frost in the next minute was ruled offside. He shot directly he received the ball, and Naisby, stooping down, let the ball glide through his hands and legs into the net. A little later Naisby made a brilliant save from a crowd of players. Reid shot straight for goal, and once again the Luton goalkeeper was called upon, whilst a corner was forced off Wightman.

Naisby continued to play very cleverly. Another player on the Luton side who was showing to great advantage was Bushell. Without giving away any of the free kicks for which Abe Jones was more or less famous, he was getting through a large amount of work and doing it well. First Frost tried Naisby, and then Hollinrake looked certain to notch a goal, but once more the Luton goalkeeper correctly gauged the spot at which the inside-left aimed and cleared the shot.

Brown did not receive so many passes as he might have done, but generally he made good use of them. One in particular was well utilised. About a dozen yards from the goal-line he crossed the ball for Moody to dash in and head into goal. Ling, however, suddenly popped up and threw away. About twenty minutes from the end the light, which had been bad all the afternoon, became very much worse, but the referee and players stuck to the game, which eventually covered the regulation period.

Long kicking seemed to be the order for the last five minutes, and though the attack never diminished to any serious extent, it could not break through the defence to seriously trouble the goalkeepers, and to the end Ling and Naisby maintained an impenetrable defence. Though they had tried very hard, the teams could not add anything tangible to the half-time score, and the result was a draw at 1 all.

The game was not one in which science was very conspicuous. The wind and the abnormal rain of late made the going very difficult, and in places the ball seemed to require an exceedingly large amount of pushing to make it travel. Smith occasionally found himself in this morass, and could not put the ball out to either waiting wing.

Bushell quite excelled himself on Saturday. He was indefatigable, and worked with both head and feet. Fred Hawkes maintained his usual safe, Needham-like methods, whilst Bob Hawkes was cool and clever. Chief interest naturally centred in the new back. At first, Wightman was a bit unsteady, but he soon improved, and on the whole played a very promising game. A number of times he tackled uncommonly well, and as he possesses a good turn of speed, there is every indication of his proving a useful man. He and Chapman soon got together, and they did not make the mistake which has lost us a good many goals this season, of both toeing the same line.

A special word must be given Naisby. When he first appeared at Luton he looked none too big for a goalkeeper, but he plays with rare intelligence, and seems all over the shop. Agile with long shots, he can get down to low ones, so that all come alike to him. High shots he generally manages to turn over the crossbar, and on Saturday he knew when to dash out and when to stay at home.

Brentford are a well-made, strapping lot of fellows. The strength of the defence seems to lay with the backs, who can tackle and kick well, whilst Ling knows how to save almost hopeless shots. Reid was the best of the forwards, but on Saturday a good deal of luck fell to his lot, and apart from the goal he obtained, he looked quite a scorer on two notable occasions.

The most interesting of the Southern League matches on Saturday was the fight between Brighton and Swindon on the former's ground. Swindon were victorious by a goal to nil, and as the Crystal Palace only made a goalless draw at Portsmouth, the Railwaymen go to the top of the League table. Millwall unexpectedly lost at home to Plymouth by a goal to nil, and at New Brompton, Southampton were victorious by 3 goals to nil. The other results were:—West Ham 3, Leyton 0; Exeter City 3, Norwich City 1; Queen's Park Rangers 4, Watford 1; Northampton 3, Bristol Rovers 2; Coventry City 5, Southend 1.