

FOOTBALL NOTES.

By the "Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

VICTORY AT LAST!

BRENTFORD BEATEN BY ONE GOAL.

WEAKENED TEAM'S PLUCKY DISPLAY.

Football form and logic never did, and never will, go together, and it is to be feared that even such a logical genius as Euclid himself would have refused the task of reducing the game to an exact science. Look at the following facts, for instance:—(1) Exeter beat Luton; (2) Brentford beat Exeter; much more so, then, as our mathematical wizard would say, will Brentford beat Luton. What actually happens? Why,—Brentford lose. And so it all comes to this, that nothing is certain in football. Here is the keynote of the success of the game, for who would go to a football match if they knew beforehand what the result would be?

"It's a long lane that has no turning," said the optimist, after four matches had been played without producing a victory, and though I'm not fond of proverbs,—they are often contradictory, and used to mean advantage by the narrow-minded,—it was a cheering thought. Well, on Saturday, the turning was reached, and this was even more cheering. Previous to Saturday, Brentford had secured 7 points in 5 matches, and had only been defeated once, whereas Luton had gained two points in four matches, so their prospects did not appear too rosy. But it was universally recognised that Luton were a better team than the figures made out, and that they had not had the best of luck, so their away victory by 1-0 over a team as near the top as Luton were to the bottom of the League table has not created very much surprise.

The Brentford ground has never been a happy hunting place for Luton, or, indeed, for any other club, so the victory is all the more welcome, especially as it represents a gain of two points on last season. It should also give Luton encouragement for their home match next Saturday with Leyton, who on Saturday defeated Coventry in London by 1-0. Luton were a trifle lucky to win, and they owe much to their defenders, who played a grand game in the second half, when the wind was against them. Writing in the "Morning Leader," Lancashire Lad describes Luton's goal in a particularly vivid manner. "At the start," he writes. "Luton had the wind to help them along, and they soon got the goal which won the game. It was scored by the centre-forward, Shepherd, and in the style approved by his namesake of Newcastle fame. He got the ball about halfway and spotted the way to goal. Hamilton charged, Rhodes charged, and Cleverly charged, but this lad would not be denied. He ran into the penalty area and then crashed in a low one which Ling could only pick out of the net. . . . Without being brilliant, Luton had more understanding than Brentford when they did attack. They possess a fleet-of-foot outsider in Brown, and the brothers Hawkes put in good work at half."

The recent successes of the home team were reflected in the attendance, quite 8,000 people watching the game. For the first time this season, the locals were at full strength, Hamilton reappearing at centre-half, but the visitors had Smith at back vice Wightman, Shepherd at centre-forward, and Lashbrooke in Moody's place, the latter being at Belfast in inter-League football. Luton won the toss and had the benefit of a strong wind, but for the first few minutes, their forwards were well held by the Brentford halves, while the home forwards showed superior combination in attack. The game was settling down quite in favour of Brentford, when Luton broke away, and after a pretty bout of passing, Shepherd dribbled through and beat Ling with a ground shot from close range. Though this point was unexpected, it was by no means undeserved, for the visitors were now working well together, the forwards showing much improvement in combination.

As the Luton forwards improved, so the Brentford half-backs fell away, though Richards put in a good deal of effective work. For Luton, Bob Hawkes was hardly at his best, as he was troubled with a bad strain in the leg, which interfered with his tackling. As half-time approached, the visitors' attacks became less persistent, and Brentford began to have most of the play. Their wingers, Brown and Anderson, worked many openings for the inside men, but their shooting was not only off the mark, but Naisby was in rare form between the sticks. A lot had been expected of Rouse, at centre, but he was very disappointing, and was well held by Bushell. Hendren, the Middlesex cricketer, did one or two good things, but he received little or no support, and the brunt of the game was borne by the full backs, Cleverly especially playing a very sound game, apart from his initial mistake in allowing Shepherd to score. Half-time came with Luton leading by 1-0.

When the game re-started, the Bees attacked strongly, and in the first minute looked like equalising when Hendren gained possession, but his shot just missed the post by inches. Brown and Walker retaliated for Luton, but Richards stopped the latter getting in his shot. Immediately afterwards, Sibbald made a fine individual run, but Naisby ran out and prevented a goal. The home team gained a corner, however, and this was cleared. Luton had been mainly on the defensive so far, but Walker and Shepherd now broke away, and made considerable ground before they were pulled up by Rhodes. The Luton defence were playing a grand game, and few real scoring chances were presented to the home team. On the other hand, the high wind made it very difficult for the visitors to do much with the ball when they got away, and it was invariably sent behind by the wing men. Naisby made a brilliant save from Sibbald, and was also troubled with shots from Hendren and Rouse.

The game was of a scrambling variety for the greater part of the time, and the referee, by some curious decisions on the offside rule, upset the players continually. The chief fault of the majority of the players was in keeping the ball high in a strong wind, and a very indifferent display was given all round. The visitors' halves played a good game, and although the Bees were constantly attacking, they found it difficult to get within shooting range. The visitors only occasionally broke away, and when they did manage to reach the Brentford end, the defence of the Bees was so good that Ling was practically a spectator. The only dangerous shot came from Walker, and this he dealt with in the coolest manner. During a Brentford attack, Potts handled in the penalty area, but Cleverly shot straight at Naisby, who effected a neat save. Brentford renewed their efforts to equalise towards the close, but they were unsuccessful, and time came with the score:—

BRENTFORD 0, LUTON 1.