

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

BRENTFORD'S LUCKY POINT.

FROST HANDICAPS PLAYERS.

The Luton Town Football Club has at least three thousand enthusiastic supporters, for no one but an enthusiast would have turned out on Saturday afternoon. The conditions were the most wintry for a football match that I can remember for many years, and reminded me of a cup-tie played in the snow with Fulham some years ago, when the score was 8-3 for the London team. The ground was not quite so slippery as on that occasion but it was exceptionally hard, and no one could blame the players for taking things somewhat easily. The forwards were handicapped more than anyone else, and this accounts for the score, a draw of no goals each. As the ground was covered with snow, the touch lines had to be swept clear to be visible.

Luton should have won the match with a goal or two to spare, but for such a day it is unfair to criticise the players too severely. The ball bounced like a tennis ball, and neither its height nor direction could be judged with any certainty. The Luton players kept their footing much better than the Brentford men, especially in the second half, when most of them changed from leather studs to rubbers. Bob Hawkes hardly seemed to be disconcerted at all, and did practically what he liked with the ball. Two of the best men on the field were the two Luton backs, Wightman and Potts, who kicked and tackled better than they have done for some time. Brentford's star players, Rouse and Brawn, did nothing out of the ordinary, and, like the rest of the players, they were extra careful not to fall down.

Luton won the toss, but the advantage of the wind was not a great asset. The first fifteen minutes was an anxious time for Ling, for the ball was rarely out of the Brentford half of the field, with the exception of a raid or two by the extreme wingers. The Luton right wing had most of the honours, and on a softer ground Streeton might have made better use of one of Brown's centres. He made a good attempt, but, as in the case of a shot from the centre soon afterwards, the ball missed the goal. A clearance by Potts sent the leather to Moody, who shot splendidly, and when a moment later Bob Hawkes banged the leather towards the goal, one of the Brentford backs formed an involuntary barrier. It was Ling who temporarily raised the siege by punting away after saving from Brown, but the Brentford forwards could not get going at all, with the result that Ling was soon busy again fielding long shots.

The home team now exerted a steady pressure, and Moody and Brown both caused Ling to handle, while Fred Hawkes attempted to run through on his own, but his final shot lacked in accuracy what it made up in force. A determined rush to the other end saw Naisby fumble at a nasty shot, but he recovered in time and the ball was cleared. After Streeton had made a good attempt, Brown gained a corner by some pretty play, and this being cleared, Brentford got down again and Wightman miskicked right in front of goal. Naisby, however, fisted away, and a moment later dealt with another dangerous attempt in the same manner. Another attack by Luton saw Walker have very hard luck, a hard shot from his foot striking one of the backs on its way towards goal. He secured the rebound, but this time the ball passed just over, and half-time came with no score.

On resuming, Anderson sprinted down the left wing, but Wightman cleared, and so set Stephenson going, but the winger lost the ball. By some very clever work, Bob Hawkes started a movement which ended in Ling saving a header from Stephenson, and soon after this Brentford had an exceedingly narrow escape from a free kick for hands taken close to the penalty line. The Londoners were having a little more of the game, but Wightman and Potts defended so well that Naisby had to save only long shots from Rouse and Brawn. Another attack by Luton ended in a very disappointing manner. Brown centred the ball, which passed Ling and left Streeton with an open goal. He just touched the ball with his head, however, with hardly sufficient force to divert it from its course, and the ball missed the farther post. Luton came near scoring after a capital run and centre by Stephenson, and in the closing stages the Bees had some wonderful escapes. Time came with the score:—

LUTON 0, BRENTFORD 0.