

LUTON'S RETURN VISIT TO BRENTFORD.

Scuffles and Goals!

Exciting Game at Griffin Park.

Luton did well to win their return match with Brentford at Griffin Park on Saturday. In its way it was a remarkable game—not so much for particularly good play on either side, but for its sensational opening which gave Brentford what appeared to be a gift goal, and the surprising incidents that every now and then brought the players to a halt and required the services of the referee as peacemaker. The Bees seemed to be in a waspish mood, and occasionally some of the Luton men were stung into reprisals. Once or twice, indeed, there were scuffles between opposing players, and it seemed that it might lead to serious rupture. But fortunately better feeling prevailed, and Luton playing strongly and steadily in the end took all the sting out of their opponents, and with a goal to the good had all the best of the closing stages of the game.

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According to the "Official Notes" which adorned the programmes, Brentford have a team which is going to make a very strong bid for the handsome cup held by the winners of Division II. of the Southern League, and what is vastly more important, promotion. "We believe," they say, "that the present playing strength is every bit as good as that with which we started last season, and may very likely prove to be decidedly stronger." Well, we have seen them now in two Southern Alliance matches against Luton, and, though there is no doubt they are very keen and vigorous opponents, they will have to do better than they have done in these two games if they are to lead the way in the League fight. They were on their own ground on Saturday, and they were at full strength, with the exception that Hendren, the Middlesex cricketer, was unable to turn out, being still engaged in the cricket field.

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Luton brought out what, with one exception—Wileman standing down for this match—was expected to be their regular team, though on the play one might suggest one or two possible changes. The back divisions were as in the match at home last Monday, with one alteration, Jarvie coming in at left back, while in the front rank Simms took the centre position, Brewis partnered Donaghy on the right wing, and Rollinson was with Wilkie on the left.

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There was not a great attendance. It was estimated that there were about 3,000 spectators, and those who came early were entertained to music, from the band, which was vigorous enough, but it must be said would hardly have stood the test at the Palace or Belle Vue. When we came up they were deep in the strains of that well-worn air, "We won't go home till morning"—with variations. But, fortunately, we had not come to hear music, but to see football. So to the game.

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Luton, playing with what wind there was in their favour, opened with a movement which looked dangerous for Brentford, but their goalkeeper cleared all, and the next moment, with some long kicking, the play was back on the Luton line, and Elvey flinging fly at the ball from a screwing kick saw it behind for a corner. From the corner kick the ball came dropping down in front of the goal, and the Brentford centre headed into the corner of the net, the Luton goalkeeper standing in the centre helpless. It was what the man in the crowd called a "soft thing." The little group of Lutonians on the grand stand looked at each other in rueful inquiry.

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Two minutes' play and one goal down! It was a very cheerful start, and, as the Brentford men with confidence inspired by their early success played up vigorously and kept the ball hovering about the Luton goal for the next few minutes, there was an ominous look about it. But presently a goal came with a nice run by Donaghy on the wing, and an incident which put a new complexion on things. Spratt, the Brentford left back came forward to meet him. And they met. Donaghy appeared to go down, but he was up again in a moment and appealing to the referee, who without hesitation pointed for a penalty kick. No one on the ground seemed to know just what had happened, but it mattered not at the moment, for Bob Hawkes took the kick and placed it in the net well away from the goalkeeper. So Luton, to the relief of their faithful little band on the grand stand, were on equal terms again. It transpired afterwards that Donaghy had pushed the ball by the Brentford back and was putting on a sprint to pass when the back put out his foot to trip him.

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Very soon after this incident Donaghy and Spratt fouled each other, and amid some excitement a big Brentford man was seen to be hugging the Luton forward. But there was nothing affectionate in the embrace, and the referee hurried up to part them. Brentford were awarded a free kick, and a rasping voice from a local supporter on the grand stand encouraged them to "Shove the goals on, you've got 'em beat." And on they went, more vigorous than ever, with the referee's whistle blowing every now and then for fouls against both sides. Rollinson got at loggerheads with one of the Luton men, and it was not long before there was another unpleasant incident, in which arms and legs looked like swinging. This passed, when Fred Hawkes took a free kick for Luton outside the penalty area, and the Brentford goal had a narrow escape. Then came Brentford's goal against Luton, and it came in a curious

A clever movement on their right wing brought the ball up, and a smart centre sent it into the Luton goal mouth, with Johnson well placed for a shot at goal. Mitchell went out to meet him, and charged the ball down. The two went with it, but in the scramble Johnson fell over the Luton goalkeeper and hooked the ball over the line. Mitchell got up with a rueful grimace and an injured hand, and play was suspended for a time while Billy Lawson gave him attention.

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After play was resumed, Elvey was brought on by the giant Elliott, the Brentford right half, and Billy Lawson's services were again resumed. Just before half-time a terrific shot, which drew a loud shout from the Brentford supporters, whizzed by the Luton goal, just missing.

It was a good attempt, but it was not quite good enough to score, and when the half-time whistle went the score stood:—

Brentford 2, Luton 1.

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Soon after restarting the referee had to caution someone in the crowd on the far side of the ground; and the game had hardly got into full swing again before Jarvie came into collision with Elliott, the Brentford winger, who, apparently favouring the catch-as-catch-can method, got hold of one of the Luton man's legs, and it looked like developing into an exciting wrestling bout. The referee ruled it out of place, and, bringing them back to football, the game went on again. Johnson soon afterwards took a pot shot at the Luton goal, and got the ball in the net right enough, but, while his colleagues were still wringing his hands and patting his back, the referee ordered a free kick for offside; and to add to their mortification two minutes later from a brilliant piece of work by Donaghy, who took a neat pass from Brewis, Rollinson headed a beautiful goal, which brought the scores level again—2 goals each.

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Brentford played up with redoubled energy, and the Luton defence were pretty hard pressed, but the backs, Elvey especially, came out of the ruck with credit, and a movement on the left wing initiated by a clever pass by Rollinson to Wilkie, who put in a fine centre, gave Brewis a chance which he made the most of, and scored Luton's third goal.

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That was practically the end of the game, for although there were some minutes to go to time, Brentford never looked like recovering. Thus Luton won their second Southern Alliance match by 3 goals to 2.

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COMMENTS ON THE PLAY AND PLAYERS.

It was a very creditable win for Luton after the handicap of that first surprise goal. Mitchell gave a good display in goal, Jarvie worked hard, and Elvey came out with honours. Bob Hawkes was in fine fettle, and was well supported in the half-back line. Rollinson and Donaghy were quite the best of the forwards, and though chances which came to the wing man were few in the first part of the game, he made the most of them, and in the second half on many occasions he showed a clean pair of heels to the opposing back and centred beautifully. Wilkie, on the other wing, never seemed to get going, and when opportunities did come he was somewhat disappointing. Brewis, too, was not at all happy, but he did at least one good thing—he scored the winning goal. Brentford are a big, bulky, vigorous team—so vigorous, indeed were they in the earlier part of the game that it seemed they played themselves out, for there was little left in them in the closing stages.

FOOTBALL NOTES AND NEWS.

By "Vigilant."

FIRST FAVOURITES FOR PROMOTION PRIZE.

Another advance by Welsh clubs threatened.

With an addition of three to the number of clubs engaged in the Second Division of the Southern League, the competition has got underweigh much more speedily than was the case last season. The whole of the sixteen clubs have now opened the ball, with the solitary exception of the new Alberrillery combination, who entertain Luton for their first Southern League match on Wednesday, and judging by the early form of some of the Welsh clubs, it seems likely that the Principality will again have something to say in the promotion question this season. Swansea, who made such a strong bid for honours last season, are depending on much the same team that served them so well in the last campaign, but so far they have not created much of an impression. They may be as good as last year, says a Welsh critic, but it will need much better form from their forwards, and more power among their halves if they wish to emulate the deeds of Merthyr and Cardiff. As a matter of fact, Welsh opinion, based on the opening games, seems to favour the idea that either Newport County or Pontypridd will grace the First Division of the Southern League next year. It has been made pretty obvious that the reputation Newport gained by defeating Cardiff City is not a false one, while the Pontypridd team is well-balanced, and those who beat them will not be many.

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The Uskside directors have been signing on men with reputations, and the newcomers promise to give Newport a strong combination. This is what is said of them. The left wing is certainly a good one, and with Matthews, the old Notts County man, partnering Lindley on the right wing the old Villan, Butler, in the centre will have many opportunities to score goals. The defence is fairly sound, but the backs are slow; they kick well, but recover slowly. The halves are good, Edwards in the centre getting through a lot of useful work. In Coates Pontypridd have a forward with a future—fast, a good shot, and an opportunist—and for a good centre half Milligan will take some beating. They have a steady defence in Dalton and Murray, and a capital custodian in McLeod. But Newport have similar qualities, to which may be added steadiness in front of goal.

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Mardy came to Luton claiming the best record for the opening games by their four goals victory over Treharris, but Llanelly ran them close with a three goals win over Aberdare. Bailiff, the

Welsh international goalkeeper, has not, after all, been snapped up by any of the big English League clubs, and Llanelli have all but two of last season's team again assisting. The side they have is one that should be persevered with, with the exception of the halves, who are weak. The Aberdare men are in need of careful training. They have a safe goalkeeper in Lewis, and Hennessy and Lewis should become a strong pair of backs. Thomas, the centre half, sets his colleagues a fine example, but the forwards are uncertain. Of the new clubs Barry have opened in very promising style, and have a player of great merit in Isherwood, while the team which Mr. Turner, the old Blackburn Rover, and Mr. Mills, from Fulham, have got together at Caerphilly won golden opinions by their form against Swansea. I note that Bateman, the Dunstablian, came out of a trying ordeal with great credit, and it predicted that with the halves a little more steady and the forwards displaying more combination, there will not be many points taken from Virginia Park. The Caerphilly team should have a special interest for Dunstablians, as in addition to Bateman they have Mantle, who used to play centre-half for Bagshawe's Recreation, and another player named Markland, from Derby, who played in Dunstable football a few seasons ago.

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Mid-Rhondda are also in possession of one of Luton Town's last season's team, Smith, the centre forward secured by the Blues from Burnley, having signed for them. With all his weight the burly Smith was never a success at Luton, and if he renews acquaintance with the Town ground this season it will be interesting to see how he fares in new company.

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Among the English clubs it must be admitted that up to the present the most likely aspirant for promotion honours is Croydon Common. They were a trifle lucky to snap up a point at Stoke through a penalty goal, but quite apart from this the fight they put up, coupled with their victories over Southend and Luton in the Southern Alliance, would seem to indicate that they will take a lot of beating. They are not exactly a clever side, but they are both speedy and dashing in front, and particularly robust in the back division, and teams will not find it easy to get much change out of them. In Williamson they have found a goalkeeper of the first order, and Little and Hutchins are a pair of backs who are triers every inch of the way, and not afraid of vigorous dust-ups. The halves are only moderate, and the chief assets of the forward line are their pace and opportunist qualities. One fault which needs to be remedied is that there seems to be far too many "coaches" in the team. At Luton they all seemed to be talking, and as is invariably the case when there is a surfeit of advice going about, it was often a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth.

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The fear was pretty generally entertained that the Southern Alliance would very soon deteriorate much the same way as the old United and Western Leagues when, at the annual meeting it was decided to dispense with the original rule, compelling clubs to play a prescribed minimum number of the players who had taken part in the most recent Southern League game. Under the present rules each club must play its "best available team" in all Southern Alliance matches, and anyone conversant with football as it is played, will readily appreciate that any such stipulation leaves ample room for any club with other fish to fry. Whether that loop hole will be seized upon as the more serious business of the season is reached remains to be seen, but it must be admitted that

so far there have been no signs of anything other than the utmost keenness exhibited by the teams taking part. No one can suggest that there has been any lack of earnestness in the three games in which Luton have been engaged and, according to all accounts, strenuous work has applied equally to the other games that have been decided. One explanation of this is doubtless to be found in the fact that provision has been made in the rules for the payment of talent money to players for meritorious services. The top club may distribute among their players up to £55, the runners-up up to £33, and the third team up to £22. After all, professional footballers are only human, and it should not be surprising to anyone if the incentive offered in this prospect of talent money should prove a powerful lever in maintaining the standard of Southern Alliance football.

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There was a time last season when Lutonians rather fancied the chances of the Blues for the Southern Alliance Championship, and the lead off of two victories against Brentford in a week certainly caused the conjuring up of similar visions. But Croydon Common are evidently bent on again having a say in the matter. Their victory at Luton on Wednesday took the wind out of our sails with a vengeance, and as they have already beaten Southend 3—0, they promise to require a deal of watching. Brentford last week atoned for their two Luton reverses, by scoring 3—1 at home against Portsmouth, so that the first table gives the clubs in the following positions, the figures in parenthesis indicating the positions in which the clubs finished in the Alliance last season:—

	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Ps.
Croydon Common (1)	2	2	0	0	5	0	4
Luton Town (3)	3	2	1	0	4	4	4
Newport	1	1	0	0	1	0	2
Brentford (8)	3	1	2	0	5	5	2
Cardiff City (9)	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Southend (6)	1	0	1	0	0	3	0
Portsmouth (5)	1	0	1	0	1	3	0
Brighton (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southampton (7)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Lutonians will note with pleasure that the Town captain, Bob Hawkes, has been selected by the Management Committee of the Southern Alliance to play for "The Rest" against last season's champions, Croydon Common, at Selhurst, on Wednesday, October 8th. Wileman's brother, who plays for Southend, is also in the team.

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The smart little hand book of the Southern Alliance, compiled by the ever courteous and informative hon. sec., Mr. J. Foster, Wembley, Middlesex, contains excellent pictures of the challenge cup, presented by Councillor C. Wall, Cardiff City, and the medals, presented to Croydon Common and Brighton and Hove Albion, as winners and runners-up last season. The cup is designed in Georgian style, and has the English, Welsh, and Cardiff coat of arms modelled in full relief on the handles. It stands twenty-four inches high, on an ebony stand, and there may be some who will be interested to know that its holding capacity is about two-and-a-half gallons. The weight in sterling silver is 237½ ozs., and the whole is a very fine specimen of the silversmiths' art. The medals, won by Croydon Common, are made

in gold 14½dwt., and enamelled, being designed in the centre with the Croydon coat of arms at the top, with the English and Welsh coat of arms at the bottom. The runners-up medals are made in gold 6½dwt., and enamelled, as in the case of the winners' medals, in the club colours.

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Local referees who figure on the Alliance official list of referees this season, are Messrs. A. E. Ansell, D. T. Dockrill, C. H. Ridgway (Leighton Buzzard), and A. Tearle, and on the linesmen's list are Messrs. A. S. Fletcher, R. Gibbard, and J. H. Scott.

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The officials and supporters of the Athenian League, in which Luton Clarence have made such a promising debut, must have felt exceedingly gratified at the progress made in one season, as exemplified by the sides which fought for supremacy in the newly inaugurated fixtures of the Champions (Catford Southend) against the Rest of the League. Fore and aft the Rest were a polished and skilful combination, and they fully deserved their victory by four goals to two. One notes with some disappointment, however, the comment of a London critic that the one person on the field where a weakness was discernible was at outside right, where Rogers, of Luton Clarence, suffered in comparison with the other forwards, who were individually and collectively brilliant.