

DEFENCE IN GREAT FORM.

Brentford held in check at Griffin Park.

Lutonians' Enthusiastic Demonstration.

The Brentford match had been looked forward to for several weeks as likely to prove the critical game regarding promotion, and events turned out pretty much as expected, as the Bees were practically in for another season in the Second Division unless they won both points, although Luton would still have had a chance to get up. It was unfortunate the Luton forward line was broken up through injuries received against Stoke. It was, of course, known Durrant was out of the question, but few were prepared for the change on the left wing, neither Rollinson nor Hoar being able to turn out. Indeed Rollinson's leg was so bad he had little sleep on Friday night, and undoubtedly as he met with the mishap quite early in the Stoke game it had a great influence on the comparatively poor display of the Luton vanguard in the Good Friday match. It was decided to play Brewis and Wilkie as the left wing, and Stevens was included in preference to Donaghy at outside right, although the last mentioned player was on the ground.

The Brentford officials regretted Rhodes was unable to turn out after his trial spin the previous day against Aberdare, following his recent injury, but Fells, who took his place, was the best back of their side, so little complaint can be made on that score. Otherwise they were at full strength for R. Sloley, their latest acquisition, was at centre forward, on the strength of his hat trick of the previous day.

The crowd numbered about 7,000, of whom at least 500 were Lutonians. Indeed, the stand was almost solely filled by wearers of light blue favours, and they made a big noise during the progress of the game, and at the finish demonstrated their opinion that promotion was practically secured for the Blues, and several of the Luton players knew about it as they made their way to the dressing-room, for they had almost to fight their way through the ranks of their supporters. The teams were as under:—

Luton:—Mitchell; Elvey, Robinson; F. Hawkes, Frith, R. Hawkes; Stevens, Wileman, Simms, Brewis, Wilkie.

Brentford:—Price; Fells, Spratt; A. Barclay,

Bentley, McGovern; T. Kent, J. Chapman, R. Sloley, Simons, Hendren.

Referee, Mr. R. W. Bussey, Norwich.

The pitch was in good condition and much firmer than any ground recently played on, but there was a fair breeze about, and Luton were favoured to the extent they were able to take advantage of this in the first half. The game opened at a tremendous pace, and the attack of both teams seemed just a trifle excited, but the steadiness of the defensive portion of both sides kept down the pressure on the respective goalkeepers. The first real shot of the match came from the foot of Brewis, who received the ball from a nice centre from Stevens, and all question of offside being given was negatived by Barclay just touching the ball as it came across from the wing without, however, staying its progress. Price, however, managed to prevent a goal, although Brewis's attempt was quite a good effort. The local spectators apparently expected most danger to come from Hendren's work, and they were inclined to be sarcastic when Elvey deliberately put the ball into touch once or twice, and thus pulled up the Middlesex cricketer in their efforts to get clear.

Mitchell came into the picture with a couple of good saves from Barclay, who tried long drives during a spell of pressure on the part of Brentford. Then Stevens altered the aspect of affairs by a dashing run through, but he was hampered by Spratt at the finish, and tamely ran the ball over the line yards wide of the goal. The first corner of the game fell to Luton, but nothing resulted from this, and the same result followed a corner which fell to the Bees following a burst through the centre by Sloley.

It appeared any odds on a goal for Luton when Stevens centred the ball to Wileman, who was clear of all opposition except Price, but for once Arthur was off the target, and sent the ball over the bar when splendidly placed for scoring. It was a real let off, and the local spectators were devoutly thankful, judging from the relief expressed all round the ropes. The Bees were inclined to play the one-back game, and Simms in particular was continually being pulled up for offside, much to his evident disgust, and the referee was noticed to be giving him a warning, apparently on account of some remarks he had made to that official. Quite the best attempt of the first half came from Kent, who, beating all opposition, put across a splendid cross drive, which, fortunately for Luton, was a trifle wide, and travelled a yard or so by the far upright. Mitchell would not have had the slightest chance with the shot if the angle had been the merest shade different, and Luton would not have been in so good a position for promotion in that event. Luton were, however, doing the major portion of the pressing, and the Bees were a trifle lucky to be level at the interval, but with the change of ends Luton were handicapped in having to face the wind and sun, and probably the latter caused them the more trouble of the two. A corner to the Bees spelt danger, and Barclay made good use of a return from the mouth of goal, but he was a couple of yards off the target. Wilkie had a nice opportunity when Simms sent the ball out to him, but he ran it into touch when tackled. But the play was mostly in the Luton quarters, and Mitchell did well to keep out a ground shot from Hendren, the ball being just turned round the post for a corner kick.

corner kick.

Simons by clever play got the better of both F. Hawkes and Elvey, and seemed certain to score when, to his own disgust, he sent the ball over the bar in a very similar manner to Wileman in the first half. This was followed by a good punch away on the part of Mitchell when that player, snapping up a centre from the opposite wing, tried a surprise shot. Several stoppages took place in this half for injuries, Simms for one getting in the wars, but in each case a little attention from the trainer set matters right, the Luton spectators cheering Wilson when he sprinted on the field in the temporary absence of Lawson.

For a time Luton appeared to be playing solely on the defensive, but just before the finish they made one or two very promising attacks, and Brewis almost did the trick with a ground attempt, when a nice effort on the part of Wilkie gave him a golden opportunity. Brewis's kick, however, proved quite a feeble one, although the direction was correct, Price being able to just get down to the ball and save the situation. Most danger to Luton in the closing stages came from a couple of free kicks within a few feet of the penalty area, but in each case Luton managed to block the way effectually, and kept a clean sheet to the end.

Result: Luton 0, Brentford 0.

It was a very hard game from the players' point of view, and they stuck to their tasks in fine style. Most of the honours must be awarded to the defence on both sides. Probably Frith got through more work than any other player on the field. At times he seemed to keep the whole Brentford line in check, including the two wingers, and it was really wonderful how he managed to cover so much ground. Mitchell had more teasing shots to stop than Price, but he never got flurried, one save in particular being taken in the coolest manner possible when it seemed all but a goal. Luton missed their two regular wingers, neither Stevens nor Wilkie being at their best. Wileman in the second half was almost an extra half-back, and the line as an attacking force suffered in consequence.