

Back to Winning Track.

LUTON TOWN'S GREAT GAME AT BRENTFORD.

Saturday's success has done much to retrieve the situation that accrued from the disaster of the previous week. There was no fluke about the win—not a shadow of a fluke, or the London Press would have said so. As an old player remarked to me on Monday, it was the first time that the London papers had ever credited the Town with deserving a win over a London club. Soon after the game was over, one of the Town players said to me, "They will talk more than ever about the result of the Bristol Rovers match now." Of course, everyone is now wishing fervently that the games with Bristol Rovers had been won. Had we won those two games by the margin of victory at Brentford we should have had a clear lead of Southampton on goal average, an equal number of points, and been first favourites for promotion. The question now is: Have we got firmly on the winning track again? If we have, I think we stand a good chance of promotion. Elsewhere I give the fixtures to be played by the four clubs now fighting for premier honours, and I think our chances are equal to theirs. To the thousands who did not go to Brentford it may seem a stretch of imagination to say that if the Town's form can be reproduced in each game, we shall net the whole of the points from the remaining games, so pronounced was the Town's superiority over a side that is very strong and has taken the points from all the other leading clubs in the Division. It is a lot to expect, but with the skill, determination, and, perhaps best of all, the esprit de corps manifest on Saturday, the Town are equal to the task, great as it is.

AT FULL STRENGTH

again, with the exception of Sid Hoak, who must now be put out of court for some time, some Lutonians appear to think the Town had an advantage over Brentford owing to the latter being without Rosier, their left full back, and Amos, their left half. Bethune, who took Rosier's place, is a much bigger fellow, and was with Bristol Rovers last season and Barnsley the season previous. He is accounted a good man. With reference to Kerr, who deputised for Amos, well, he was the "Bees'" best half by a long way, and as one who has seen Amos play on many occasions, I am certain he cannot excel this black-haired lad's showing of Saturday. Moreover, the Brentford ground is a very difficult one for visiting teams, and evidently the grass disappeared a long time ago. A little time before the start there seemed small prospect of a large crowd, but eight thousand saw the commencement, and there were about ten thousand present before half-time. The Town players started with such pace and confidence that at no time did the crowd ever get an opportunity to work up their customary enthusiasm, and when it was overdue they were busily engaged in "ragging" the referee. At that time the Town never looked like losing their lead, while in the last fifteen minutes they simply outplayed the "Bees," and with more accuracy in front of goal would have very considerably improved their goal

have very considerably improved their goal average. This was practically the only fault that could be found with the team. I do not overlook the fact that to score two goals on "foreign soil" is a notable feat, but the forward work was so splendid that it was worth many more goals. The

. ALL-ROUND DISPLAY

of the Town was a tonic to the supporters, and if only it can be reproduced on Brentford's return visit, there will be no "barracking" of players, and (I hope) no abuse for "Crusader."

The game was not many seconds old before Bassett dashed away and sent in a fine cross shot that dropped just over the bar on to the top of the net. Thenceforth we saw interesting exchanges, but the Town were always the more dangerous, the speed and intelligence of their movements surprising both the home players and supporters. The home halves had frequently to resort to tripping, and the backs adopted the one-back game with some measure of success. Strange to relate, however, the Town forwards eventually took the right steps to defeat the offside theory, and after one or two narrow escapes, Alton and Bethune became more circumspect. The game had been in progress 25 minutes when the first goal came. Previously Young had been a trifle fortunate and not a little clever to get rid of several shots. Bookman, beautifully nursed by Butcher and Simms, had been fouled by J. Elliott, the old 'Spur, I believe, and Roe placed the ball nicely forward. Harassed by Butcher and Bookman, Elliott tried to clear with an overhead kick, but turned the ball goalwards. Simms darted between the backs and got close to Young before shooting, and the ball struck the custodian's leg and rebounded. BASSETT, however, was on the alert, and banged the ball into the net, following it at such speed that he required extrication from its meshes. The Town never lost their grip on the game, and although Hendren and Capper occasionally put over good centres, Lennon and Tirrell, assisted by the halves, kept Bailey so

WELL COVERED

that when called upon he was never in serious difficulties.

The second half was equally keenly contested, but the Town always maintained their superiority, and as the game wore on Young's work became increasingly difficult, for Brentford's forwards found it almost an impossibility to break through the Town's middle line, and in the last fifteen minutes Luton's attacking force numbered eight, for the halves were almost as prominent in front of goal as the forwards. Bookman received special attention and responded brilliantly, and time after time he made an electrifying sprint, and adopted the principle of cutting into goal. At least three times he might easily have scored, but preferred to pass, and goals should have come from these passes. Once he dashed through and endeavoured to hit a pass from Butcher right in front of goal, but the ball skidded wide. Then he passed right along the goal-line between the posts, and Simms just failed to tap through, but a goal came after a fine effort from the winger had hit the face of the bar and fell to the right of goal. SIMMS snapped it up, and screwing hard and low, had the satisfaction of seeing Young hopelessly beaten. Immediately afterwards

Bookman finished another great effort with a shot that banged against the foot of the post. When the end came the "Bees" were

THOROUGHLY BEATEN.

and the defenders were leg-weary and demoralised.

Every department of the team did well. With Bailey no fault could be found except that on one occasion he dallied instead of getting rid. Otherwise he fielded cleanly and delivered smartly. His work was neither so difficult nor so exacting as Young's. One of the features of the game was the struggle between Lennon and Hendren. The latter was persistently fed, but when he managed to elude Foster, he found Lennon in his most masterful mood. Hendren is one of the most sportsmanlike players in the game, and there was not a suggestion of unfairness about the work of either player, so the tussles were all the more enjoyable. Hendren did get over several nice centres, but he had to do it before getting to close quarters with Lennon, for the latter invariably got the ball then. Lennon's play was as good as against the Villa, and that is high praise. Tirrell was also on top of his form, and his hefty work nullified the craft of both T. Elliott and Capper at close quarters, and while Lennon was paying special attention to Hendren, Tirrell was keeping an eye on Morris and T. Elliott, sharpshooters of the team. The work of the backs was rendered easier by the excellence of the halves. With the old formation restored, they were the dictators of the progress of the game. They all tackled with a grimness and celerity that fretted the opposition, while the amount of work each got in for the benefit of his forwards kept the home defenders almost constantly engaged. Foster was as strong and resolute as a lion; Walker was as keen and relentless as in any previous game, and Morris never beat him single-handed. Roe was his cool, calculating self, quick on the ball, and clever on his feet, and the three had many a passing bout that got the "Bees" in a tangle.

THE FORWARDS

gave one of their best exhibitions of the season. Their success was one of tactics, and the rapidity with which they moved and the manner in which they varied quick short passing with wide swinging passes wore down the "Bees." It would not be quite fair to single any man as the best, perhaps, because if Bookman scintillated it was largely due to the unselfishness of his colleagues. Simms led the line magnificently, and so far as leadership is concerned, I do not want anything better. The one thing necessary is that he should get back his shooting powers, and one of these days he must come into his own and get a decent crop of goals. Higginbotham played as well as ever he has played, rendering useful service by taking the brunt of the heavy tackling and distributing true passes to Bassett and Simms according to the best advantage. Butcher was equally good, and his dribbling evoked general admiration. It was from him and Roe that Bookman got most work, and the little forward constantly drew his opponents and then pushed the ball on the ground for the winger to take in his stride. Butcher should never be excluded from the line again. He is too valuable as a constructive agent if not an executioner in the matter of shooting. Bassett had the bulk of the wing work in the first half, and did it well, in spite of one or two nasty raps. He centred well, too, and if he would adopt the "cut in" as he did in the Cup-tie at Portsmouth, he would get goals. Bookman was brilliant, and was yards too fast for J. Elliott and Alton. I hope he will retain that "cutting in" for goal, and while I prefer to see a winger pass as he passed on Saturday, gentle taps in front of goal, there are occasions when a shot pays, and Louis might well have credited himself with a hat-trick on Saturday. On this form he is certainly Ireland's outside left. Which reminds me: Ireland are due to play Scotland next Saturday week. Had the Irish Selection Committee seen him on Saturday he would have been chosen there and then.

Mr. Vickery refereed well. The principle of delaying to stop the game when a man is down owing to injury is new, and there is something to be said for it in such circumstances as Saturday. I agreed with him.

LUTON TOWN	2
BRENTFORD	0

BRENTFORD.—Young; Alton, Bethune; J. Elliott, Hunter, Kerr; Capper, T. Elliott, Morris, Norton, Hendren.

LUTON TOWN.—Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Foster, Walker, Roe; Bassett, Higginbotham, Simms, Butcher, Bookman.

Referee.—Mr. L. E. Vickery, Birmingham.