

READING'S TRIUMPH.

Decisive Defeat of Luton.

BRAITHWAITE'S "HAT TRICK."

The Reading team continued their winning career on Wednesday when Luton were defeated at Elm Park by three goals to nil, Braithwaite performing the "hat trick." In their last four league matches our local club have registered seven points from a possible eight, and with Northampton to provide the opposition on Saturday there is no reason why yet another jump in the league table, placing Reading among the first half dozen clubs, should not be accomplished.

After the morning's heavy rain the greasy state of the ground was all against accurate football, and consequently both sides were responsible for many mistakes, but the crowd of 5,000 were most enthusiastic over two of the goals scored, as they were among the best seen at Elm Park for a considerable time. Brilliant sunshine favoured the commencement of the match, and winning the toss Eggo elected to play with the advantage of the wind and sun. The home side immediately attacked the Luton goal and Springell and Braithwaite were early in the picture, but Brookes cleared successfully. A fine run by Smith ended in Higginbotham kicking just over, and from the kick, play was transferred to the other end, where Hoar, on the rising right wing, appeared to have the better of Cockerill by clever manuvring. Luton forced a corner and the Reading goal had a narrow escape, Dennis heading over with Duckworth on the ground. The sun appeared to trouble the visiting players considerably, and for a time Reading had things all their own way. Miller, the visitors' left half, was hurt in a tussle with Wilson, and was obliged to retire for a few moments. A good movement by Messer was deliberately handled by Graham, and from the kick Smith forced a corner. The ball came to Higginbotham, who shot hard at the goal, but Johnson was in the way, and an appeal for hands against him was disallowed. Springell received a delightful pass from Messer, who was in fine form, but was dangerously tackled by Johnson, and the whistle blew for a foul. A corner resulted and Wilson shot over. Shortly after Higginbotham ran through on his own, but shot just by. Eggo gave Smith a beautiful chance, but from the centre Fergusson fumbled badly by heading the ball straight into Brookes' arms.

Reading Open the Scoring.

Reading's first goal came after forty minutes' play, Springell centring well to Higginbotham, who in turn passed to Fergusson, and Braithwaite rushing up shot hard into the corner of the net. The same player almost added another when a fine pass from Springell ended in a corner off Johnson. Luton retaliated and Shankly received a fine pass from Hoar, but shot wildly over.

Half-time: Reading, 1, Luton, 0.

Reading opened strongly in the second half and luckily for them the sun was concealed for the greater part of the time behind the clouds. Messer passed out to Springell, and from a good centre Brookes fisted clear from Fergusson. The heavy ground began to tell its tale and play slowed down considerably. Braithwaite's second goal may be suitably termed a magnificent piece of opportunism, as he placed the ball into the right-hand corner of the net from at least forty yards out. Springell essayed a pass across to Smith, who just missed with a high shot. The Luton front line got going, their inside forwards being seen to advantage, and a fine shot by Dennis was equally well saved by Duckworth.

The "Hat Trick" Goal.

Shortly after Braithwaite secured his "hat trick" amidst great enthusiasm, when from a beautiful pass by Smith he headed the ball past Brookes into the net. Until the final whistle play became very ragged, but Luton were unlucky not to score once when Hoar shot hard from the right, the ball just missing the cross-bar. Smith forced a corner and kicking to Cockerill, the latter player essayed a shot, but the ball went harmlessly by.

Result: Reading, 3; Luton, 0.

The teams were:—

Reading: Duckworth, Eggo and McConnell; Wilson, Messer and Cockerill; Smith, Higginbotham, Fergusson, Braithwaite and Springell.

Luton: Brookes; Johnson and Graham; Mills, Walker and Miller; Hoar, Shankly, Kerr, Dennis and Brown.

Reading are undoubtedly a much-improved side and great hopes are entertained that the winning sequence will not be broken; at any rate, not for some time. A true reflection of Wednesday's match can be gathered from the opinion shared by everyone that the cleverer side won, and had the ground been harder a greater margin of goals might have resulted. The home forwards showed far better understanding and Braithwaite and Springell were always a thorn in the side of the Luton defenders. Higginbotham and Fergusson, as usual, were untiring in their efforts, and Smith's well-placed corners and centres left little to be desired. The three half-backs must be among the best in the League and their sterling support gave the front line many openings. McConnell and Eggo constitute a fine partnership, and when called upon Duckworth was never seen to give his side any cause for anxiety.

LOOKER-ON.