

BRENTFORD BEATEN.

FLUCTUATIONS OF FORTUNE AT LUTON.

Town Defence Takes Honours.

By Crusader.

LUTON TOWN 2
BRENTFORD 1

LUTON. — Banes; Graham, Richards; Black, Fulton, Millar; Daly, Roe, Rennie, Yardley, Bedford.

BRENTFORD. — Bailey; Stevenson, Winship; Davies, Bain, Ware; Lawson, Lane, Watkins, Drinnan, Douglas.

Referee. — Mr. G. Franklin, Southsea.

TO say that LUTON TOWN scrambled through their game with BRENTFORD would be to express the feeling of the large majority of the supporters. It was a hard game for everybody. The Town players suffered a serious handicap when Black was injured before any material damage was done at either end, but thereafter they were the favourites of Fortune, as Brentford played the sounder game, and were unfortunate that their good work met with scant reward. To some extent they themselves were to blame, for while they often played delightful football in midfield, they could not consummate their attacks. This does not diminish the credit due to the Town rearguard, to which, more than to any other department of the side, was due the fact that Luton annexed both points.

A BETTER SIDE.

Unquestionably Brentford fielded a much better side than lost to Luton at Griffin Park early in the season. It is rather difficult to correctly appraise the merits of the respective sides, for the injury to Black had an adverse effect that could hardly be estimated. First it meant that the attack lost the services of Roe, and in the second half Daly went to the intermediate line, with Bedford brought over to the right, and thus the left flank was crippled. With a full and efficient team, the Town would certainly have done better, but otherwise Brentford played the better football, and were much more nicely balanced.

WEATHER CONDITIONS.

A tribute must be paid to Bert Day for the efforts he had made to get the ground playable. It was in such an awful state in mid-week that it looked as if it had been harrowed. The dryer weather had helped, but when the frost of two or three days had been on it there seemed little hope of the pitch being anything like fit. When the players turned out it did not appear very bad. Within a quarter of an hour, however, it had cut up in shocking fashion, and before the interval the whole stretch of the centre of the ground was a quagmire, and foothold was something worse than precarious. Added to this was the discomfort of the mist and the penetrating and chill drizzle that continued throughout.

"TETCHY" PLAYERS.

In such circumstances it was not surprising that some of the players were a bit "tetchy," and that there were incidents in the second half that called for a sterner hand than Mr. Franklin showed, though some of the troubles were missed simply because he had not eyes at the back of his head. The visitors took exception to the unflinching manner in which some of the home players, especially Richards, went into the fray, but that applied equally to one or two members of their side. It is not for me to bolster or excuse unfair tactics, but certainly there were worse things behind the official back than in front of it.

IN THE PICTURE.

Brentford began like a side determined to carry all before them, and played fine football, the manner in which the inside men and the halves fed the wingers giving them the territorial advantage. In consequence, both Graham and Richards were in the picture early on, and there was desperate tackling at each end. The Town had fewer chances, but such as they had demanded more work of Bailey than was required from Banes when Brentford got going. The skill of Lawson and Douglas kept the home defenders on the alert, and when Black was hurt and retired the Town stock went down to an appreciable extent.

WHEN FORTUNE SMILED—

But Fortune turned then, and Bailey, who had made one brilliant save from YARDLEY was beaten by the same player with a fine shot, following a corner that was not well placed, but which a defender failed to get clear. The inside-left pounced on the ball, and scored a fine goal. There was a lot more seen of Brentford after this, but they could not beat Banes and Company, and with Fulton and Millar helping the backs splendidly in defensive work, and covering the errors that were bound to be made on such a ground, the Town goal remained intact. Hopes were raised again when the Town obtained their second goal.

AND GAVE AN ENCORE.

This was a big stroke of luck, Black had returned to the field, and was standing in the outside right position. He could not send the ball far, but once managed to get it to Yardley, who had crossed over to the right of Rennie. With good judgment Yardley passed across the field to BEDFORD, who trapped the ball, flipped round a defender, and then shot for goal. Bailey was out of position, and the ball went high over his head, and seemed likely to clear the bar, but it

came down and passed into the net, leaving the visitors very crestfallen.

BRENTFORD'S EFFORTS.

Nevertheless they pulled together well and gave the Town defence a lot of anxiety. Their constructive work was of high class, but they found the home rearguard at their best, and though now and then one or other managed to slip through, he was either overhauled or forced to shoot from such a position as enabled Banes to get the ball, and so the change of ends found the Town with a substantial lead.

LUTON TOWN 2
BRENTFORD 0

The story of the second half does not require much telling. In the first minute there was a quick rush by the visitors, and when this was beaten Bedford dashed away after receiving from Rennie, and then returned the ball to the centre-forward, who had only Bailey to beat, but he failed, as the goalkeeper went down and grabbed the ball. Tempers now began to show, and players of either side were aggressors or went for reprisals. There were long spells of midfield play, but for the most part the game was in the Town's half.

BANES IN ACTION.

Rennie had another good chance when Yardley broke through and centred from the line, but Bailey got his fist to the ball before the Town centre-forward's head could meet it, and the danger was cleared. At the other end Watkins burst through and shot from point-blank range, but the ball rose sharply over the bar. Then Banes saved magnificently by punching over the bar, then went down to another fast cross shot, and punched away, while a moment later he gathered a fast ground shot and got rid of it in spite of efforts to bustle him.

BERT LAWSON DOES IT.

Brentford's goal was well deserved, however, and it came from Lawson. There had been some quick play on the left wing, and the ball was driven through a crowd of players to the right wing. LAWSON saw his chance, rushed in to meet the ball, and drove it hard and true all along the ground into the farther corner of the net. This was the signal for a revival by the Town, and they exerted considerable pressure, Yardley and Bedford being prominent. Bailey was tested time after time, but did his work well, and the attack spent itself.

A GLAD END.

For the rest the game was largely in Brentford's favour. The Town made occasional raids, but the visitors attacked in better formation, and Banes, Graham and Richards were kept at full stretch, while Daly's willingness and speed frustrated at least one dangerous situation when the equalising goal appeared certain. And the Town goal did not fall again, the whistle sounding with all the players extremely tired, and glad of the release.

THE TOWN REARGUARD.

Banes had not an enormous amount of work considering the general superiority of the Brentford attack. Still, he made several fine saves, and could not be blamed in the least for the goal that was registered against him. Both Graham and Richards played a gallant game at back. The former was again at his best, and his timing in kicking and tackling was remarkably good. Richards, however, took the eye most. His dashing work upset the Brentford attackers, and his strength was undiminished at the end. He has sprung right back into favour again, and, with conditions at their worst, was invaluable.

MIDDLE MEN.

Fulton and Millar put up a plucky show against a clever and robust line, playing themselves to a standstill. Both went into the task with a will, and reduced the burden that fell upon the shoulders of their colleagues in the rear. Roe also did good work in this line in the first half, and Daly surprised everybody by his contribution after the interval. For one of slight build he stood the grueling well, and the crowd appreciated the handshake he received from his mates.

ATTACK.

Naturally, the forward line felt the pinch through the loss of Black. In the circumstances it was hardly to be expected that they would show the same skill and combination as the visitors. All did their best, Rennie missed comparatively easy chances, but the holding ground had much to do with this. Bedford and Roe were willing as ever, but the man of the line was Yardley, who not only played with all his might, but with considerable skill.

BRENTFORD'S BEST.

For the visitors, Bailey was not blameless over the second goal, but made good saves. His backs were sturdy and kicked well, while Bain was the best of a useful middle line, and Lane the craftsman of a lively attack that was yet lacking. There were 8,000 spectators.