

A CLOSE CALL.

LUTON TOWN JUST WIN AT HOME.

Brentford's Brisk Fight.

By Crusader.

ON Saturday afternoon I met the BRENTFORD team as they left the station on their way to the LUTON TOWN ground, and among the first batch was Mr. Harry Curtis, the secretary-manager. As usual, he was very cheerful, and although he made no prediction of what would happen later in the afternoon, it was obvious that he was expecting something good from the visit. It is all to the benefit of the team when the manager has plenty of confidence. After the game we met again, and his geniality was somewhat dimmed, though not to the extent that one might have imagined. He was sore about certain happenings, and decidedly of opinion that the Town had been lucky to win.

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Undoubtedly Luton were very fortunate indeed, for on the run of the game Brentford were the better side, but there were factors that should not be overlooked. The worst of these was the injury to Black. It is true he came back to the field after he had received attention from the trainer, but it is equally true that he was of no use. The best that can be said of him was that he often took the attention of an opponent because he was there, but his injury was of such a character as to prevent any active participation in the game. He could not walk quickly, much less run, and could not kick the ball many yards when he had the field to himself.

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The accident distinctly upset the Town team. When Black left the field Roe fell to the rear, and on his return Black occupied the outside-right position, with Daly inside, and the latter is not an inside forward. In the second half, with a view to making the best use of Bedford, the latter went to outside-right, and Black to the extreme left, and Daly went into the middle line. This meant that the Town practically had but four forwards for an hour and a quarter, and it was not a matter for wonder that they were not a settled combination.

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Another point that Mr. Curtis touched upon was dangerous tactics, and he was very severe upon one player of the Town. Then, again, he asserted that he would report a Town player for an incident in the second half. I could be in agreement with him on both matters, if the trouble were one-sided. It is true that a Brentford player was struck when he approached a Luton player after the ball was gone, though for what purpose and with what intent I do not know. It is equally true that a Luton player was struck from behind by a Brentford player when there was no provocation except a hefty charge.

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To go further, there were several unpleasant incidents of players rapping ankles when the referee's back was turned, and, all in all, I do not think there was more blame attaching to one side than to another, though all the players were not tarred with the same brush, thank goodness. The game was not controlled so well by Mr. Franklin as the game at Griffin Park, and though the referee can hardly be blamed for what transpires behind his back, he should have come down with sterner authority on some of the offences he saw.

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It must not be inferred that there was rough stuff all the time. It was only occasionally that players forgot themselves, and the worst incidents were in the second half, when the miserable conditions in which the game was played had probably affected tempers, and the lack of success on the one side, and the heavy drain upon the sapped energies of the other, taxed the powers of physical and mental endurance to the utmost. Possibly Mr. Franklin felt that the conditions justified lenience, and he was certainly very patient with all the players.

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Brentford are a good side, and their recent achievements were well understood. It would have been a tough job for the Town even had Black escaped injury, and as it was the "Bees" had the better of the play. They were workmanlike in defence, and their attack was skilful. There was an inclination to carry on constructive work when the moment for completion was ripe, and had the inside forwards finished as cleverly as they conceived their attacks, it is quite likely that the Town would have suffered defeat. Only the stubborn nature of the rearguard carried the Town through to success.

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Last season Bert Lawson was brought into the Brentford team at Luton as a last-minute choice. He scored both their goals in that game, and in this game he got their only goal. He was prominent in the early stages, and two of his centres might well have been turned to account. The "Bees" were the quicker into their stride before the ground churned up, and the delightful manœuvring of Lane was a teasing proposition for the Town defenders. The use made of the wingers was a wise plan, and the quick and accurate passing evoked admiration.

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When the Town began to find their feet, however, there was more danger to the Brentford goal, because the inside forwards were better on the target, and Bailey made a great save from Yardley, but could not get the ball away, and Rennie appeared certain to score when he stepped in and took possession, but the ball either twisted off his foot or struck Bailey and went out to the left for Bedford to put behind instead of across. Lawson was prominent again with fine runs and centres, and then came the injury to Black, and his consequent retirement.

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The first goal was indirectly the result of a silly foul by Drinnan on Roe, near the middle line. Graham kicked the ball well into the Brentford area, and Winship, failing to head the ball away, conceded a corner. Daly's kick was low and well out, but Bain failed in his attempt to volley, and the ball skidded to YARDLEY, who stopped it, and shot hard and true for the ball to enter the net low down to Bailey's right hand. The goal was well deserved as an individual effort, but the "Bees" were unfortunate to be in arrears on the run of the game.

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They promptly set about the task of recovery, and Banes and his backs were hard pressed. Lane once went through in the cleverest fashion, but Millar managed by a tremendous effort to foil him as he was on the point of shooting. A thrill at the other end followed when Rennie was allowed to go through from an offside position, but Bailey got to the ball first. Then Black came on again, but it was soon evident that he was to be a mere passenger, for he had difficulty in keeping on his feet.

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Curiously enough, he had a part in the work that brought the next goal. He failed to kick the ball as hard as he desired, but it went to Yardley. Hemmed in, Yardley suddenly swung the ball over to the unmarked BEDFORD, who eluded a belated challenge by Davies, and then banged the ball for goal. Bailey was some four or five yards from his charge, and evidently thought the ball was going over the bar, but it dipped under the bar and landed in the net, to the surprise of the goalkeeper and his colleagues.

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Banes had been engaged several times in the preceding play, and had made one or two good saves, but he had more to do now, as Brentford made desperate efforts, and had the better of the exchanges right to the interval. It required a lot of hard and relentless work by Graham and Richards to keep the danger from reaching Banes, but all three did well, and there was a sigh of relief when the whistle went with the lead still intact.

LUTON		2
BRENTFORD		Nil

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Rennie had a great chance of putting the Town further ahead within a minute of the re-start. He and Bedford went clean away with the Brentford defence scattered, and the winger presented his centre with an easy chance. Bailey advanced, however, and smothered the shot, and the ball was scrambled away. Before Brentford got a chance their goal had another escape, Yardley making a raid on the left and centring, only for Bailey to forestall Rennie and get the ball away.

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Then the game, which had never lacked vigour, became rough. Blows were struck surreptitiously, a player of each side being to blame, and there was rough play that merited a caution when it was simply penalised in the ordinary way. The referee had no easy task, however, and as the ball travelled very quickly considering the state of the ground, he had plenty to do to follow the play. Brentford attacked fiercely, and after Watkins had just failed with a fast drive that skimmed the bar, LAWSON scored a fine goal to cap good work on the left.

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Banes had previously saved well, and was not allowed much respite, though the Town forwards did make a big effort to

pull round, and gave Bailey quite a lot of work. The old goalkeeper of the Town did not make any further error, and some of his saves evoked applause. His backs also stood up to it well, as the game was drawing to a close Brentford made a long and desperate attack to snatch the game out of the fire. However, Banes and his backs, with the help of the halves, resisted manfully and successfully.



Chief honours of the game went to the Town backs. Graham and Richards foiled the thrustful "Bees" time after time, and the latter's physique was a big factor. He was always in the thick of the fray, and his robust methods were not relished by opponents. It was largely the hefty charging and the resolute rushes they disliked, for he did not trip or hack. Graham played a cool and judicious game, and for all-round skill was the best back on the field.



The middle and forward lines were disorganised by the withdrawal of Black, and a special word of praise is due to Daly for the way he took the right-half position after the interval. He was a bedraggled but happy fellow at the end. Fulton worked like a nigger, and Millar also stuck to his task grimly, and it was good to find that he had a better understanding with Richards. Yardley was the conspicuous man of the attack, and if anyone deserved to score, he did. Bedford and Roe were energetic and ready to do anything that came their way, and Rennie put in good work in midfield, but was not so effective in front of goal.



Harry Bailey would be blamed for the second goal, but he did a lot of fine work, and some of his saves were thrilling. Two strong backs, and a hard-working middle line, in which Bain was the most prominent, supported their forwards skilfully. All five in this department were clever, none more so than Lane, but everybody was glad to see Bert Lawson deserve his place in the team.

There were 7,000 spectators.

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.