

WENT DOWN FIGHTING

LUTON'S SPLENDID BID AT BRENTFORD

One Goal Decides

(By Crusader)

BRENTFORD 1
LUTON TOWN Nil

BRENTFORD.—Baker; French, Adamson; Watson, Bain, J. C. Burns; Foster, Robson, Holliday, Scott, Crompton.

LUTON.—Harford; Kingham, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Hutchison, Tait, Rennie, Rowe.

Referee.—Mr. A. J. Brown, Bristol.

HOW near Luton Town came to bringing off a magnificent coup only those who visited Griffin Park on Saturday afternoon can tell. It would have been a great feat, for Brentford are the only League team in the country with

a hundred per cent. record. There was little to choose between the teams, but the advantage was with the Town; they had by far the better of the first-half exchanges, and had the forwards had even a moderate amount of luck there would have been such a lead at the interval that Brentford could not have recovered. None was more relieved at the final whistle than the manager of the home club, and the smiles were only just beginning to pull through the clouds half an hour after the game, which had served to show that not only are Brentford beatable, but all the talk we have heard and the reports we have read about them taking "an excursion into the Second Division" are just so much wind. I am quite sure that their very astute and genial manager, Mr. Harry Curtis, does not subscribe to the view that they have only to play to win.

THE MORAL

The moral of the match is up to the Town management. The need for recruits is obvious, because we have as fine a chance as ever if the necessary strengthening is acquired. This does not involve adverse criticism of the players on view; all played well, and we have had ample proof that these players can hold their own with the best; what is wanted is that there shall be no weakening when a member of the side has perforce to drop out owing to injury. At the present time we have the finest middle line in the Division; some who see First Division football go farther, and say that there is nothing better in the whole of the League. The forward line is good in parts; the defence is similar, but would have been better still had not Hodgson been a casualty. Brentford have a splendid defence and a strong middle line; their attack is clever, and it was only in the forward line that they were just a bit better than the Town on Saturday; for the rest the Town took the kudos. The one thing that more than anything else beat Luton Town was the good luck of the Brentford goalkeeper. He, at least, of all associated with the Griffin Park Club, should know that it is better to be born lucky than rich.

The first half provided the most thrilling struggle, and it was largely maintained afterwards, but the pace had affected the players, and there was bound to be some loss of skill and speed after the first hour. The reason for the Town's superiority in the first session was the free use they made of the ball. They kept it on the move, and had the more and better chances. Most of the balls aimed at Harford's charge came from long range, whereas at the other end the Town forwards frequently came within half-a-dozen yards before letting fly. Unfortunately the whole line did not move up, and the marksmen generally were Tait and the wingers. Once, however, Rennie was almost in the jaws of goal, and it seemed all Griffin Park to a slum backyard that he would score, but when he hit the ball hard and true Baker was filling the narrow space—sheer luck for the goalkeeper. Half-a-dozen times the goalkeeper happened to be in the right spot, sometimes by agile movement, and at others by accident, while there were twice as many corners forced by the Town as by Brentford.

A SPLENDID GOAL

Harford had plenty of anxiety, too, and there was one feature about the home team's play that could well have been copied by the Town forwards. Holliday had very little chance, although working hard, but his colleagues immediately to right and left shot with commendable frequency, Robson especially being on the mark. Harford saved some rattling good efforts, and the shot that beat him was a spectacular essay by ROBSON—one of those that come off once in a moon if the marksman is fortunate. After a left-wing rally by Brentford the ball was centred, and McGinnigle headed well away. Robson had fallen a little to the rear of Holliday, as was his wont; met the ball before it struck the ground, and it streaked high and dry into the net off the upright. It was a splendid goal, and thoroughly deserved for the enterprising Robson displayed. The Town made light of this disadvantage, but worked harder than ever, and Baker saved time

after time, one effort by Tait evoking frantic cheering as Baker managed to reach the ball. The change of ends came with the Town unfortunate. They should have been two or three goals ahead on a comparison of opportunities and the run of the play.

BRENTFORD 1

LUTON Nil

There was no slackening of pace when the game was re-started, and the first thrill came when Hutchison dashed in and challenged French and Baker as they were waiting for the ball to pass out of play near the post; the goalkeeper picked up hurriedly, and Hutchison back-heeled it out of his hands, and it went behind. Had the ball come the other way Tait would have had an easy chance. Harford had all the time been showing good judgment and confidence in cutting out centres and corner kicks, and now did so twice in quick succession, while McGinnigle and the backs countered every move that the home forwards could produce in groundwork. Tait, working valiantly as ever, then broke through, and, after a hot tussle with a couple of defenders, slid the ball across the face of goal, but there was none up to take advantage of the chance. These were the things that tried the temper of the Town supporters—the other inside forwards being too far behind to give Tait that bit of help that was necessary, for he was invariably overcrowded at close quarters.

ROUGH STUFF

There had been only one or two fouls, and those of a minor character in the first hour, but the wrath of the crowd was poured on Mackey when he knocked Scott rather sick. The inside-left had been doing much clever dribbling, and came up the centre of the field, holding on to the ball, and none of his opponents went for him; they simply waited for him to part, and he dodged round them. Mackey changed the idea; sailed in first time and took man and ball together in one full-bodied rush, and Scott went down, with Mackey atop. The crowd yelled their displeasure, and the referee showed his by giving a free kick against Mackey. There were then two or three exchanges of hacks and raps, and Referee Brown made me write that he was evidently a home referee, but I struck it out, giving him the benefit of the doubt, though how he missed a flagrant foul by Crompton on Kingham was a mystery. The Luton supporters showed what they thought of him when they gave him a rousing cheer after Burns had badly fouled Hutchison. Play was very vigorous—an almost sure indication that players were getting tired, but it settled down after one or two had received attention from the trainers.

LAST EFFORTS

Brentford showed up better in this half, but the Town were always as good, and replied every time, and the defenders of either side were kept on the alert. There was no further score, though both goalkeepers saved splendidly under pressure. Rennie again hit the goalkeeper with a shot from point blank range, taken without waiting for the ball to settle, and once at each end there was a wild scene in the goalmouth, as the custodian could only touch the ball out, but it was scrambled away. Then came the accident to Tait. He was trying to hook in a left foot shot when Adamson dashed in and kicked at the same time, and the Town forward got the full force of the blow a little above the knee on the underside of the leg. He had to be helped off the field. Even with ten men the Town fought fiercely, and just before the end Hutchison nearly got the equaliser; nipping into the goalmouth, he cleverly hooked the ball out of the reach of Baker, then away from Adamson, but when he turned round to catch it again it was on the ground, and opponents were on top of him before he could scrape it through. So the end came with the spoils remaining at Brentford.

GRAND DEFENCE

Harford is keeping goal remarkably well. He had no chance with the shot that beat him, and made several good saves. His confidence in dashing out and cutting out the centres was something new and profitable. Kingham, about whose fitness there had been a lot of rumours, played his customary heady game, while Mackey did very well indeed. He did not hesitate to boot the ball, and was quicker in tackling. As in the previous game, he made one wonder if there were not possibilities of his development as a back, although his methods may not be orthodox. It was something new, however, to see a Town back using his weight. McGinnigle again played a glorious game, his smothering work and his quickness of recovery being admirable. As he is playing to-day, there can be few superiors in the country. Kean and Fraser were again at their very best, and the line proved as useful in defence as in attack. They were the most effective department on view.

ATTACK NEEDS TUNING

The Town attack is not satisfactory. In the open they are clever enough to outwit opposition, but do take time to get to close quarters. If Hutchison and Rennie made a point of going up immediately they have parted to their colleagues, and so assisting Tait, there would be no question about goal scoring, but they do clever things in midfield and then stay there, leaving Tait to try and force a way through. Apart from this fault, the line played well. Tait led with his usual gallantry and forcefulness, and Mills and Rowe got over good centres, but the combination seen in midfield should be just as much in evidence in the penalty area of the opposition. There is too much waiting for the ball.

to come out, and yet the halves are usually supporting the attack for that purpose, and they don't miss much. A keener appreciation of finishing powers would work wonders with the forward line, and so with the results.

BRENTFORD

Brentford have a very good side, and if ever the directors of a club had good reason to be thankful that a manager stayed on, Brentford's have that Harry Curtis remained when things were going awry last season. He has got together a very sound and workman-like side. Baker is not only clever; he is exceptionally lucky French and Adamson, especially the latter, are a fine pair of backs, and Bain was the outstanding player at half. He vied with McGinnigle for middle line honours. Holliday was not seen as much as we expected, but Robson and Scott were very clever, and got a lot of work out of two nippy and troublesome wingers.

There were 18,000 spectators, and the receipts £903.

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