

AS GOOD AS THE BEST

LUTON HAVE AS SOUND A CHANCE AT BRENTFORD

(By Crusader)

LUTON TOWN went down to the early of the game; they made the more favourites for Promotion — BRENTFORD, but went down fighting, and were exceedingly unfortunate. It was every-where agreed that they should have had at least a division of points, but there was not a Lutonian present who did not feel that the team had been very much ill-used by Fortune, and that the game should have been won by them before the change of ends.

IT was a capital struggle, and the shot that decided the issue was a venture-some effort, and one of which the marksman could only have had very big hopes. Robson had tried several similar shots, but most of them were too high. No other Brentford forward had been so enterprising, simply because he had not had the chance, but Robson was never loth to have a shot, and this one was sufficient to give his side the victory.

THE Town's first half display was an eye-opener for the crowd of 18,000, and there was about as much enthusiasm among the two hundred Luton followers at Griffin Park as there is among seven or eight thousand at Luton games. Perhaps that was because they played so much better than had been expected against a side of the proved calibre of Brentford. To meet a team that has won five consecutive games and run them to a goal on their own pitch is an achievement, but Luton deserved success.

FIRST half football was sometimes brilliant, always full of incident and interesting to all. Brentford's followers were very excited as their goal underwent escapes, and it was evident that they left the ground with greater respect than ever for Luton. Save for a few incidents in the second half there was not much to quibble about in the way of rough play, although the game became decidedly vigorous after about an hour. All the rough stuff was not on Luton's side, although the referee seemed particularly keen on whistling up the Town players.

TWO or three times in the first half he pulled up Fraser for quite clean tackles, and as he is new to the job so far as League games are concerned one can hope that he will not allow the crowd to sway him, as seemed occasionally to be the case in this match. He was very good on technical points, and should do well when he has had a little more experience. In any case he did not want to see rough play, and put it down.

BAKER'S luck was the general comment at half-time, for the Brentford goalkeeper had made a lot of saves, some of them without knowing anything about it except that he had got in the way of shots from close quarters, or that he had happened to be there when the ball came in. With all that he certainly saved his side from defeat. It must be said that once Harford had a really big stroke of luck when the ball struck him, but he was not so fortunate as Baker—not by streets. He got a black eye and a swollen mouth.

ANY fear that the Town defence would let the side down soon vanished, for Mackey improved a great deal on his previous games at left back; was much quicker to get in for a tackle, and lost no time in getting the ball out of danger. In the second half he showed that he could also be master of mid-field, for two or three times he rushed well up the field, with opponents falling back, and sent the ball well up to his forwards.

THE Town halves were the mainstay of the team, however, for they played splendid football throughout, and were not only very fine in defence, but almost as good as a forward line when they went up. It was in the latter department that the Town failed. There was too much of the old fault of hanging back; time after time they outmanœuvred the Brentford defenders, and then, instead of all going forward, there would be Tait struggling alone against a pack of defenders.

THAT will give some idea of the Town's superiority on the general run of the play, for they had more shots at goal, and especially from close range. Brentford's defence was as solid as the Town's, and with Bain playing a game similar to McGinnigle we saw two very good pivots holding up the middle of the attacks in clever style, for McGinnigle held Holliday even better than Bain held Tait.

THE latter did get through at times; very often, in fact, and twice had tough luck in not beating the home goalkeeper, whereas Holliday was rarely able to elude the vigilance of McGinnigle. Even allowing for the inexperience of Mackey as a full back, the Town's defensive departments were solid, and little fault could be found with any of them, Harford and Kingham each doing well, and Fraser and Kean supporting McGinnigle and completing a magnificent middle line.

AS I have remarked, it was just the need for a little more fire at close quarters from the inside wing men, who were good enough in the open, to change very completely the result. The extreme wing men did not do so badly, although Rowe requires to put a little more speed into his work, and to position better. Hutchison and Rennie were good enough to serve the other three forwards well, but were needed more in the penalty area when the attack was likely to bear fruit.

THE goal that won came twelve minutes before the change of ends, when ROBSON met with a grand first-time shot the ball as it came out from the head of McGinnigle. The scorer was near the edge of the penalty area, and never hesitated for a fraction of a second, but simply let fly with all his might, and had the satisfaction of seeing the ball whizz past Harford and enter the net after touching the upright near the bar.

BRENTFORD showed up as a well-balanced side, and will certainly go far in the competition, but if they are the best the Town have to meet there is just as much chance for Luton to beat the table as for Brentford. Their team work was made to look better because their inside forwards were always well up with the others, and showed a readiness to shoot that was not nearly so apparent among the Town inside forwards.

AFTER the match I heard criticisms of Rennie for "missing" chances. Had he missed the goalkeeper with his shots I suppose he would have been a great forward. Well, he didn't, but it was just luck on the part of Baker to be there when the ball came his way. The shots had to be quickly taken, and they were, but luck was against the marksman and with the custodian.

THE fact remains that the Town were the better side for the greater part

chances, and their play generally was good enough for any club. If they maintain this level they will go very near to bringing off the feat we so ardently long to see, but there is no doubt that there needs to be reinforcement without loss of time.

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.