

FEW THRILLS AT BRENTFORD

Both sides get slow handclap

By ONLOOKER

BRENTFORD 1, LUTON TOWN 0

ATTENDANCE: 6,770

IN a dull, lifeless game at Brentford this afternoon, Luton Town were one goal down in the 39th minute. Town tried desperately to break through, but had no success.

The fans were bored to tears and showed their distaste by giving the players of both teams the slow handclap at one point in the second half.

Black and white favours were well in evidence when the Town arrived at Griffin Park this afternoon, and whatever happened the Town were ensured of plenty of vocal support.

There were two changes in the Town line-up of a positional nature, with Gerry King being given a chance to lead the attack and Riddick moving to inside forward. This, no doubt, was designed to give Riddick more opportunity to lie deep and help in the Town's build-up.

They faced a stern task against Brentford, evident by the fact that the Bees have conceded only two goals in their last six matches.

Town skipper, Riddick, won the toss and Brentford kicked off, going straight into the attack. A long ball from Scott to Lawther looked threatening until Slough stepped in to kick the ball out for a throw-in. Then a header by Rioch cleared the danger for Luton and Brentford won another throw-in but Thomson gained possession, but all the town players were back.

Determined work by Docherty, weaving his way through the middle of the Luton defence, ended with a weak shot which Read saved and both sides were just sparring with each other in the opening minutes.

SHORT CORNERED INTERCEPTED

A ball on the line by Moore won the Town a corner conceded by Gelson, but the short one, taken by Whittaker, was intercepted.

But the Town kept on the attack and a ball by Rioch to Jardine, who had moved up on to the left wing, was too strong and Brentford cleared with a goal kick.

Then came some Town pressure and they won a corner when Slough took the ball over the line in trying to clear from Cobb. From it, there was serious danger for the Town goal when Gelson came right up to pick up a loose ball in the six-yard box, but Read did well to block his shot and Moore kicked for safety.

Brentford had the bit between their teeth, and Higginson burst through to force Slough to give away another

lifted it into the waiting hands of Read.

The Town were working hard in midfield, but still were producing nothing of a dangerous nature, and when King veered over to the left to take a Jardine pass Gelson snuffed out the danger with a back pass to Brodie.

Tony Read earned applause for a good save from a centre from the left by Cobb, but neither side were giving the fans much to shout about, and the game was developing into a battle between two stern defences.

Riddick and King mounted the next Luton raid, but the latter's centre was a little too strong for Riddick to reach and Ross dribbled the ball away out of his penalty area. Then a sharp Town break saw Rioch send Pleat running through with only the goal-keeper to beat, but his shot struck the legs of Brodie and went behind for a corner, which was cleared.

Had this break produced a goal it would have been a good example of the Town's new pattern of play in which they suddenly break from a defensive position to catch the opposing defence completely off its guard.

Brentford showed that they were well up in this game too, when Cobb made a burst on the left wing and his cross shot finished on the top netting.

Riddick was penalised for obstruction a few yards outside the penalty area, but the indirect free kick was weakly taken straight into the wall of Luton defenders. However, they failed to get the ball away cleanly and Brentford won a throw-in near the corner flag.

Then Docherty gained possession and his cross was just missed by Lawther with his head.

Lawther was looking the danger man in this Brentford side and was giving young Alan Slough a deal of trouble. Riddick was sandwiched as he burst through on his own, but Brentford were awarded a goal kick and from it Cobb made ground with some interpassing and finished by putting the ball out to Ross, whose high centre was picked up well by Read.

Back came the Town, but King ran into a pack of

How the goals came

COBB for Brentford after 39 minutes.

three players and was beaten by numbers.

There was a free kick for the Town just inside the Brentford half for a foul on Jardine by Higginson. Rioch placing the ball towards the penalty area once again found a line of stripe-shirted defenders ready and waiting.

Riddick then tried a solo run upfield, but ran into trouble from McKenzie and the Town were having to use all their wits to find a path to goal.

There was not a great deal of excitement and play became mainly confined to midfield as the Town defence gradually gained the measure of the opposition.

The only shot for some time was a long speculative effort by Whittaker which caused Brodie no trouble at all.

NICELY TIMED HEADER

A nicely judged header from Slough to Read cleared the situation for the Town again when Crisp put the long cross into their penalty area.

Whittaker was getting through a tremendous amount of work covering up any holes that appeared in the Town rearguard and they were content to stay on the defensive for a spell waiting for a chance to materialise.

Brentford won another corner on the right which was taken by Docherty and the Town were awarded a free-kick for some incident in the melee of players as it came across.

From this, Jardine and



Town goalkeeper Tony Read had no chance with Brentford's goal in the 39th minute.

Moore tried to engineer an opening, but Pleat was well offside when the pass came through from the left-half.

Back came Whittaker again with another through ball and this time Pleat again fell into the offside trap midway in the Brentford half.

King, controlling the ball nicely, pushed it out to Slough, but was unfortunate when the return pass ran awkwardly for him and Brodie came out to pick it up and clear.

COMPLETELY BEWILDERED

Although they were now doing more pressing the Town seemed to be completely bewildered about finding an answer to Brentford's persistent offside tactics.

Likewise, the home side were now not producing much and real stalemate was setting in with 15 minutes to go to the interval.

Then the Town did find a way through through the persistence of King and Pleat but Pleat lost control when challenged by McKenzie and Brentford were able to relieve matters at the expense of a throw in, which was cleared.

The Town were settling down nicely to their game in midfield, but after a spell of interpassing Ross beat Thompson to the ball and worked his way over to the wing where he overdid the clever stuff and

the Town conceded a throw in. From this Ross put the ball into the centre to Higginson, who quickly pushed it on to the penalty area. Rioch placed the ball into the net under the diving boot of Read.

This goal came in the 39th minute.

DEFENCE IS SHAKEN

Spurred on by this goal, Brentford now looked more formidable, but Scott wasted an opportunity by shooting well wide.

Away came Higginson again and rounded Rivers, but Moore got in quickly to make a challenge as he was about to shoot and diverted the ball for a corner.

The Town defence was shaken by the goal and in the closing seconds was not looking at all certain.

BRENTFORD 1

LUTON TOWN 0

The Town came out for the second half with an uphill battle before them, and it remained to be seen whether manager George Martin in his half-time talk would pull them more into the attack in view of the position.

It did not look the case when they kicked off because three men—Riddick, King and Pleat—straight away moved upfield to take up the role of strikers.

KING IS FOULED

King tried to make a break on the right, but was fouled, and Pleat plugged the ball in to the middle with the free kick and then had another go when the ball rebounded back to him, but Brentford came away with the ball.

After a spell of passing back and forth in defence, Slough started the next Town raid, but Gelson sent it back into the Town half, as he did an effort by Jardine immediately afterwards.

Pleat tried to change the direction of the Town attack with a pass to Whittaker and the movement finished with King shooting well wide.

GETTING NOWHERE

Luton were generally finding their men better than Brentford, but most of their work was now being done in slow motion and it was not getting them anywhere.

First shot of any note in this half was one from the edge of the area by Docherty which Read saved in fine style.

A lack of excitement in this game was not tending to please the crowd and on a couple of occasions there were outbreaks of the slow clap.

Brentford, however, still managed to look the more dangerous of two punchless teams and a centre by Ross was wasted by Lawther who headed it well wide of the goal.

STILL IN WITH A CHANCE

Then came a free kick and there was a quick chance for Brentford when Cobb pushed the ball through to Lawther who slipped as it reached him and Slough in front of goal cleared smartly for a corner.

Pleat tried to put the Town back into the picture with another determined dribble in which he beat three players before running up against a further two and hurt himself in trying to force the ball past them.

The Town were still in with a chance if only they could break a way through, and now King, Whittaker and Pleat in turn tried to do just that without much success.

Then back came Brentford and after Moore had blocked a shot from Ross, Pleat moved up to blaze high and wide.

RIDDICK AS DECOY

Rioch won a throw in on the left, level with the penalty area, and this was followed by another to the Town near the corner flag, but Hawley once again cleared the danger.

Town were now trying hard for an equaliser and won a free kick just outside the area when Pleat was fouled by Gelson. Whittaker came to take it and attempted exactly the same thing which brought a goal against Aldershot.

He sent Riddick over to the far post as the decoy and with the defence concentrating the

attention on Riddick, let fly a left foot shot which beat Brodie, but unfortunately hit the cross-bar. This was a move which the Town have practised in training and it so nearly came off again.

Another free kick to the Town just inside the Brentford half was taken by Slough and, from a pass by Pleat, Riddick had a shot which was off target.

There was more urgency about Luton now and Thomson and King combined with the latter's pass to Rioch intercepted by Gelson.

Then Brentford broke away

Stopwatch time, first goal in Town match in 39 mins., 54 secs

on the right through Ross to win a corner, which he placed tamely into Read's arms.

There was a good save by Read who had not been troubled a great deal in this



David Pleat, Town's live-wire right-winger.

half when he went down to a shot from Ross which was going away from him and then Rivers with the goalkeeper beaten did well to head away for a corner.

There was another shot from Cobb which the goalkeeper saved before this spell of Brentford pressure was beaten off.

Then Rioch raced clear for the Town and his hard, left-footed drive along the ground brought Brodie to full stretch, giving away a corner.

The Town, with time now running out for them, were trying doggedly to salvage a point and a thrust by King again finished with the ball going wide. Read then saved a stinging shot from long range by Crisp.