

BURTON SWIFTS v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Burton on Christmas Day. Result:

Burton Swifts 2 goals.

Luton Town 1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Burton—Cray, goal; Lowe and Ashby, backs; Cunningham, Wylie, and Dwight, half-backs; Goodchild and Fisher, right; Leigh, centre; Blackie and M'Clure, left.

Luton — Williams, goal; McCartney and McEwen, backs; Davis, Stewart, and Docherty, half-backs; Gallacher and Birch, right; Donaldson, centre; Little and Ekins, left.

Having regard to the vigorous defence shown by the Swifts at Luton, the Luton directors decided to send their big men to Burton, on Christmas Day, and accordingly McInnes and Coupar were given a rest, their places being taken by Little and Birch. Possibly, the directors were wise in their day and generation, but whilst McInnes and Coupar are showing such remarkably fine form as they have been exhibiting recently—McInnes, indeed, has shown it all the season—their omission necessarily involves the weakening of the team.

I have no doubt, however, they could do with the rest. They have been working tremendously hard, and perhaps the rest went a long way towards preparing them for the brilliant parts they took in the matches on the following Monday and Tuesday.

The team had to leave Luton on Friday evening, owing to the impossibility of making the journey on Christmas Day, and therefore they were able to turn out for the match in the best of condition. The weather being fine, a good crowd assembled to witness the struggle, and this was satisfactory to both Clubs, a pooling arrangement being in force. The gate amounted

to about £64.

The first half of the game was splendidly contested, Luton having rather the better of the exchanges, and eventually scoring a goal through Donaldson. Fisher made a good attempt to equalise, and just before the interval, Goodchild scored an offside goal.

The second half had scarcely been commenced, when the Swifts were awarded a very doubtful sort of goal, Ashby taking a free kick, and the ball hitting the cross-bar and glancing off into the net. Presumably it was held that Williams had touched the ball, the fact of its striking the bar lending colour to the supposition.

This reverse infused a lot of spirit into the Luton team, who kept the home defence hard at work for the next half-hour. But, as usual, the Swifts showed that they knew how to defend their goal, and all the efforts of the visitors were baffled. It must be admitted, however, that the Luton shooting was decidedly weak, and some splendid opportunities were badly muffed.

At length, the Swifts broke away, and M'Clure taking a pass from Leigh, gave his side the lead with a fine shot. The homesters after this did the greater part of the pressing, but were unable to again get through, and a hard-fought game ended in a victory for the Swifts by two goals to one.

The Burton correspondent of the "Athletic News" says: "The losers, although without their clever forward, McInnes, gave a capital display, and hardly deserved to lose, and it was certainly a grand feat on the part of the Swifts to bring off a victory, their improved staying powers being chiefly responsible for this result. Cray, although far from well, gave a capital display, whilst Ashby and Lowe, bar one or two mis-kicks, owing to the slippery ground, were very safe indeed. The whole of the halves were in rare trim, though the forwards were not so prominent as in the Newcastle match, Goodchild playing rather indifferently at times, and consequently Fisher was not seen at his best. Leigh and M'Clure, however, were in splendid form. For the losers, Williams, Docherty, Donaldson, Ekins, and Gallacher were most prominent, the combination of the forwards being very fine indeed at times."

The Burton man's admission that Luton hardly deserved to lose may be taken to mean a good deal. In fact, it does. In general play, the Luton men were streets in front of the Swifts, and it was nothing but persistent ill-luck, indifferent shooting, and the sturdy defence of their opponents that prevented them winning.

In the other League matches on Saturday, Leicester, on their own ground, beat Loughborough by four goals to nil, Small Heath vanquished Darwen by five goals to one, and Grimsby Town drew at Lincoln at one goal all. Lincoln's goal was scored from a penalty, and Grimsby's from a free kick. On the Manchester City ground, the home team were beaten by Newton Heath by a goal to nil.