

# THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

## SWINDON v. LUTON TOWN.

Played at Swindon on Saturday. Result:—

Swindon ..... 2 goals.

Luton Town ..... 1 goal.

The visit of Luton was a great attraction at Swindon on Saturday, the remembrance of former battles exciting the interest of the Swindon supporters to a very keen degree. The homesters had not been doing any too well in the League competition, and there was great hope—a hope which was justified by the event—of taking a couple of points out of Luton.

Luton unfortunately were not in a position to take the field with any very confident expectations of success, owing to the re-arrangement of the front string, rendered necessary by circumstances which are tolerably well known and to which there is no need now to refer. Burbage being unable to get away, the centre-forward position was entrusted to Plummer, of the Reserves, Cox, the half-back, filled Tierney's place at inside-left, and Durrant substituted Saxton at outside-left.

Swindon had two or three absentees, but there was not with them such a wholesale weakening of the attack. Luton won the toss, but there was very little advantage in that, and as a matter of fact Swindon were the first to act on the aggressive, though for a time their efforts were fruitless. They obtained a corner off McCurdy, but this was not turned to account, and a shot from Gardiner was saved by Ord, who was performing in goal for Luton for the first time.

Luton retaliated with some vigour, and Menham cleared splendidly from a fine shot by Brown. The play then became of a give-and-take character, both ends being visited in turn, but if anything Luton had rather the better of the exchanges. A turn in the tide came, however, from a free kick for Swindon, Gardiner scoring the first goal after twelve minutes' play.

Luton made strenuous efforts to equalise, and Menham more than once seemed in danger of being beaten, but he managed to bring off several very fine saves. But if the forward line had been up to the mark, there is no doubt that Luton would not only have got on level terms, but would have taken the lead.

After a somewhat long period of offensive work by Luton, Swindon broke away through a big kick by Ritchie, and Smith succeeded in registering a second goal for the homesters. It was a case of one side having the play and the other side getting the goals. Luton tried hard to retrieve their fortunes, but at the interval they were still in a minority of a couple of goals.

In the second half, Luton continued to more than hold their own in point of play, and at length Blessington netted the ball, but the referee, after consulting a linesman, disallowed the goal on the ground of offside. The decision was not appreciated by Luton, who were confident, perhaps not unnaturally, that the point was a perfectly good one.

A little later, however, Brown found an opening and scored a goal about which there could be no possible doubt, but try as they would to make a draw of it, Luton did not succeed, and the Swindonians were left in possession of a lucky victory by two goals to one. Luton were certainly the better team, and it was rather hard lines on them to lose.

The forwards perhaps did quite as well as could have been expected, Durrant playing a very fair game, but still there was a considerable difference between the attack and the defence, and it was that difference which caused Luton the loss of the two points. Despite the fact that Swindon had the advantage in the matter of goals, there was no fault to find with Ord's custodianship.

The "Swindon Advertiser" says: "Towards the end of the game Luton played up splendidly. I think they were seen at their best during the last twenty minutes or so; Menham and his backs withstood the onslaught capitally, but Luton stuck to their work, and very neatly brought about a coup during the final seven minutes. Blessington found an opening and promptly slammed the leather into the net. Off-side! What a relief to Swindon! But Luton came on again harder than ever, and Brown, who had been shooting better than any other man on the field, met with a just reward five minutes from the end. It was a well-earned goal, well meriting the applause unstintingly bestowed upon the effort."

One of the matches of the season will be that which will take place on the Bury Park enclosure on Saturday, when Watford will take the field against Luton. The matches between teams representing these Clubs have always been of an exciting nature, but I think they will all have to take a back seat as compared with Saturday's encounter. The Watfordians are very confident, their display against Queen's Park Rangers last week having given them a pretty high opinion of themselves.

The Luton team will be as follows:—Ord; Lindsay and McCurdy; Clifford, Holdstock, and Williams; Brown, Blessington, Burbage, Saxton, and Durrant. Probably Allen would have played inside left but for a severe kick he received in the match against Hitchin Blue Cross.

The referee will be Mr. King, of Wellingborough, and therefore Lindsay will have to mind his p's and q's. The kick-off will take place at 3.30. I understand the Watford men will bring a big and enthusiastic following.

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Of the other Southern League games, the most interesting from the Luton point of view was that at Kensal Rise, where the Queen's Park Rangers only just succeeded in beating Watford. The Hertfordshire men, who have been much strengthened by the inclusion once again of Hare, the old Arsenal man, rendered a splendid account of themselves, and it was their misfortune rather than their fault that they were beaten by the odd goal.