

The [Southern] League.

LUTON v. SWINDON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	4 goals.
Swindon	1 goal.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Lindsay; Turner and McKean; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Eaton, Ross, Lamberton, Moody, and Barnes.

Swindon—Dixon; Keenle and Atterbury; Wells, Stringfellow, and Logan; Bowell, Popwell, Lean, Bowdsworth, and Chalmers.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield.

Despite the beautiful weather and the grand display given by Luton the previous week, there was not a large attendance to see Luton's return match with Swindon on Saturday, the early start and the fact that there is a little more work about probably preventing a good many from attending. The ground looked in pretty good order, but the influence of the sun made the surface very treacherous, and after it had been churned up a bit the players often found it very difficult to keep their feet.

The first meeting of the teams took place on the opening day of the season, and though Swindon won by the narrowest possible margin—a goal to nil—they really outplayed Luton to a greater extent than has been done by any other team since. The railwaymen have not sustained their early promise, and their position now is not so good as it ought to be, judging from the merits of the players.

On Saturday they gave Luton something of a fright to start with. The homesters were the first to make overtures, Ross taking a centre from Eaton and missing the bar with a fine shot, while Barnes and Bob Hawkes evinced a desire to get on visiting terms with the Swindon custodian. Then the railway men went down the field, and Chalmers the old Watford player, putting across a nice centre, Bowell took advantage of a misunderstanding on the part of the defence and scored with an easy shot.

This early and unexpected reverse made the spectators feel anything but comfortable, but fortunately this gloom was soon dissipated, for Luton attacked almost immediately, and Barnes equalised from a centre from Eaton. This success was all the more noteworthy from the fact that it was Barnes' first goal of the season. The outside-left had been showing wonderful improvement in recent matches, and it only wanted a little more readiness to take advantage of opportunities in the goal-scoring department to make him as good a winger as could be wished for.

Luton were soon on the aggressive again, and Atterbury kicked behind from another effort by Barnes. The corner was very well-placed, and a tolerably warm time ensued, several likely-looking shots being put in, but as luck would have it, most of them rebounded off the men who were defending the goal, and thus the situation was saved by good fortune rather than good judgment. Later on Moody was fouled just outside the penalty line, though he cleverly slid along and was a long way inside when he appealed and Bob Hawkes, taking the free kick, sent in a regular teaser which was quite as much as Dixon knew how to manage.

After this the visitors transferred the play for a moment, but Barnes took the ball back again in fine style, and running to within three or four yards of the upright, put in what was evidently meant to be a pass across the mouth of goal. The ball, however, was going straight to the custodian, who ran to meet it and missed, and Barnes then simply tapped the leather into an empty goal. It was a bad mistake on the part of Dixon, but probably the grossy state of the ball had something to do with his failing to gather it.

Now that Luton had gained the lead the spectators were on good terms with themselves and confidently looked for further goals. Up to the interval they looked in vain, however, for though Swindon were kept chiefly on the defensive, they played a smart and vigorous game—a little too vigorous sometimes—and Luton's many attempts went unrewarded. Ross put in a splendid shot, which Dixon tipped over the bar. Soon afterwards Ross and Lamberton prevented each other scoring by both trying to do it, and before half-time the same players put in grand shots which either went just by the posts or were well saved by Dixon.

Play in the first part of the second half was of a pretty even character, though once or twice Lamberton, in spite of trouble with his knee, came as near as a touchar to getting through. On one occasion Swindon also came unpleasantly near equalising. Bowell led the attack on the right, and from his centre Luton made several ineffectual attempts to clear. Their failure to get the ball away was watched with painful interest by the spectators, and relief was not forthcoming until at last Lindsay dashed out and did the needful. Swindon came again, however, and managed to secure a corner, but Ross headed away from this, and Luton going to the other end, the Railwaymen were in turn obliged to concede a corner kick. This was capitally placed by Barnes, and Moody very neatly headed through, a performance for which he was very warmly applauded, as it practically made the game safe for Luton.

Still, Swindon kept going very pluckily, and it was not long before Lean nearly succeeded in beating the Luton defence. Had he done so, however, it would have been hard lines on the homesters, as the linesman's flag had been waved in consequence of the ball having been out before Chalmers centred. And this was not the only escape Luton had, for a bad pass by Ross gave the Swindon forwards a grand opening, but Lindsay cleared well. Nevertheless, on the whole, the play favoured the homesters, and eventually Eaton scored the fourth goal after Dixon had failed to dispose of a shot from Lamberton.

Beautiful shots by Fred Hawkes and Ross, and some remarkably fine play by Eaton, were the most noteworthy features during the last few minutes of the game, but there was no more scoring, and the match ended in a very well-earned and decisive victory for Luton. The play was not as good or as sensational as that of the previous week, but that could hardly be expected, especially as Lamberton and Moody were not thoroughly fit and therefore could not show the dash which characterises them when sound. Lamberton's knee went again in the first half, but he kept his position and was able to do some useful if not brilliant work.

Ross was good, though not absolutely at his best, and Barnes and Eaton both put in some fine work. The latter played his best game this season, and two or three times outwitted his opponents in brilliant style, while the mere fact that Barnes scored a couple of the four goals marks the day as a red-letter one in his calendar. Nothing need be said as to the defence, except that it was good, even if it did not reach the standard of the previous week.

Swindon, as already stated, are a fairly smart team. Bowell showed himself to be a very useful and persevering player at outside-right, but Chalmers on the opposite wing did not strike me as being up to his old form. The backs and halves were pretty sound, but Dixon was not one of the most reliable custodians.

There was only one other match in the Southern League on Saturday, owing to the Cup-ties, and that took place at Southampton, where New Brompton were defeated by 2 goals to 1. I see that complaints are made as to the way in which New Brompton fouled their opponents, and Luton people, at any rate, will not be surprised to hear it.

It will be seen that Luton are now half-way up the table, and though that position is a little flattering, owing to their having played more matches than most of the clubs below them. I don't think there is much fear of them going back to that position which was causing so much anxiety a few weeks ago. If they can beat Plymouth Argyle next Saturday they will make their position much more secure.

I was extremely sorry to hear last week that if Lamberton had been unable to play on Saturday his place would have been taken by Penman. That would have been too much like the old state of affairs to have commended itself to the supporters of the Club. Surely it would have been much better, if Bob Hawkes would not go forward, to let Fred take the inside-right and put Pritchard at half-back. We should at least have class men in the team, and it is really hard on a good man like Pritchard that he should have to stand down, though with the other men fit he cannot very well be given a place. Fred Hawkes has played forward before, and I have no doubt he could do it again on a pinch.

The draw for the first round proper in the English Cup Competition has not proved very favourable to the South. Bristol Rovers have to visit Bolton to play the Wanderers, Plymouth Argyle are drawn away against Newcastle United. Tottenham Hotspur have to visit Middlesbrough, Millwall and Southampton have to settle the question of superiority at Southampton, and Bristol City have to go to Plumstead to play the Arsenal. The winners of the Manchester United and Fulham replayed match were expected to entertain Brentford or Reading, as the case may be.