

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

SWINDON v. LUTON.

Saturday was the first time, I believe, that Luton have brought a point home with them from Swindon. However we manage to "do them down" at Luton, the "shunters" have always more than held their own against us on their own ground. For instance, take last season's results. While here we beat Swindon to the tune of 4-1, playing away they were victorious by the odd goal, the score being 1-0 for Swindon.

But times have changed, and while Luton has a greatly improved team, Swindon seem to be on the downgrade this season, being nearly at the bottom of the League. There was no certainty, however, about Saturday's tussle, and the general expectation here was that it would be a draw. On the other hand Swindon were hopeful of achieving another victory. When the teams left the field, however, honours were divided.

The teams were :

Swindon : Ling ; Gill and Atterbury ; Hindle, Oakdene and Potter ; Dean, F. G. Wheatercroft, Lyon, Monks, and Chalmers.

Luton : Platt ; Blackett and McCurdy ; F. Hawkes, White and R. Hawkes ; Warner, McDonald, Brown, Pickering, and Barnes.

Luton were once more fortunate in winning the toss, and Swindon kicked off with the sun in their faces. The Luton forwards at once dashed away in the style that has won the admiration of everybody. But Potter, the Swindon half, distinguished himself by pulling up Warner. Then the home side made tracks for Platt's charge, McCurdy tackling them decisively. Luton now pressed again, and Blackett, from back essayed a shot that was safely cleared by Ling. The game was very fast, and the ball was quickly carried from one end to the other, the spectators being aroused to a high pitch of excitement.

Up to now there had been little to choose between the two teams, though the impartial spectator would naturally have gave Luton the palm for neatest play. Their forwards were constantly dangerous, Brown in particular playing a fine game.

Some good work by the Swindon front line placed Wheatercroft in an excellent position for scoring, but he hesitated, and was robbed of the ball. The home side were playing in great style, and compelled a corner that led to an intensely exciting struggle in the Luton goal, but Platt contrived to clear. Luton once again had their turn at attacking, and McDonald missed from long range. Swindon delivered a vigorous onslaught on the Luton lines. The visitors' left wing went away, being cleverly stopped by Gill.

Half-time arrived with a blank score. On form the ultimate result still remained hanging in the balance. There is so much of the unexpected in football that it was anybody's game.

Upon resuming the visitors' hopes were soon in the ascendancy. They early displayed unusual energy; every man worked like a Trojan. Luton were determined to obtain the lead, and no defence could surely stand against them. Their forwards, exchanging quick, short passes, swept down the field, and R. Hawkes crowned this good work by scoring.

Oakdene had hard lines with a shot from a corner. Hindle, one of the home players, was injured, and had to leave the field, but they still pressed, and Chalmers just failed to head a beautiful centre from Dean into the net. Ling then saved his side by dealing skilfully with a shot from R. Hawkes. Swindon pressed, and it seemed that they must score, but the Luton defence was sound.

A penalty was awarded against the visitors, and Dean scored a goal. To the end the home side tried hard to score again, and the Luton goal had many escapes.

Result—Luton 1, Swindon 1.

I think Swindon were exceptionally lucky in making a draw, because the penalty which was awarded them was a doubtful piece of refereeing. To one of the spectators who was nearer to the men than the referee there did not seem the semblance, and even Swindon themselves were not strong in their appeal. Still, they obtained their point, and thus escaped defeat.

Splendid games, and some exceedingly interesting results, formed the main characteristics of the other matches in the Southern League tourney on Saturday. Fulham, by drawing with Southampton, still retain their unbeaten record, and are the only team in the three great leagues that can claim this honour. Norwich and Northampton performed very creditably in winning away from home, the former against the champions, the latter against Millwall. The Queen's Park Rangers broke their run of ill-luck and earned a fine victory over Plymouth Argyle by two clear goals. West Ham and Reading played a close game, the latter finally winning by the margin of a goal, and New Bromton gained two much-needed points after a sensational finish with two goals scored in the last three minutes. Portsmouth and Tottenham engaged in a Western League game, playing a drawn game and scoring no goals.

But for goal average, Luton would this week have been at the top of the League. Apart from that, Fulham have an unbeaten record, though Luton has won more matches. The Londoners have been lucky in making one or two of their draws.