

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SWINDON.

LUTON FORWARDS FAIL AGAIN.

Played at Swindon on Saturday before 5,000 spectators. Result:

SWINDON 4 GOALS.

LUTON NIL.

Teams:—

Luton.—Platt; Jackson and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Schofield, Warner, Brown, Gittins, and Barnes.

Swindon.—Ling; Gill and Atterbury; Beaumont, Bannister, and Tout; Birkes, Kidd, Coates, Wardrope, and Murphy.

Referee: Mr. J. T. Ibbotson (Derby).

Previous to Saturday Swindon had never inflicted a heavy defeat on Luton, the encounters in Wiltshire being usually of a close character, while at Luton the Railwaymen have invariably gone under pretty often with a decent margin. Luton were constituted on Saturday in something like their regular formation, except that Gittins was given a chance at inside-left, following a good show at New Brompton.

Swindon had the advantage of the wind at the start as a result of their captain winning the toss. Quite early in the game the home forwards gave evidence of their dashing tactics and Jackson had considerable trouble in checking a rush from the whole line of attack, but McCurdy ultimately nipped in and relieved the situation. The next time the Luton goal was endangered Coates was pulled up for offside, Jackson having advanced up the field to repel the wing attack. A pretty bit of play on the part of the Luton right wing assisted by F. Hawkes was also spoilt through Schofield getting offside and a good opportunity was thrown away. Hereabouts Luton were doing much better and Gittins got in a good shot which Ling, however, succeeded in kicking away. Keeping up the pressure there was hope of Luton opening the score, but unfortunately the ball came awkwardly to Schofield and it rebounded directly to Murphy, and he raced away at a terrific pace towards Platt. From this burst through a corner resulted, and Jackson managed to get the ball away from the goal-mouth with a fine kick.

For some moments Luton were unable to get the ball far down the field and Platt was kept on the pounce, but eventually Tout, in attempting a shot put over and the pressure was relieved by a goal kick. At the opposite end a pass from Schofield to Warner sent the latter away and beating Atterbury, it looked a good thing for Luton, but Warner shot wide with only the goalkeeper to beat and literally threw away one of the easiest chances of the match. Barnes was fouled out on the wing and Bob Hawkes took the place kick. He put in a beautifully-judged shot which Ling had great difficulty in stopping, but the Swindon goalie saved the goal by jumping and catching the ball just under the cross-bar. It was a fine attempt and a good save, and was enthusiastically cheered by the crowd.

After twenty minutes' play Coates snapped up a pass from Wardrope and dashing through in Corinthian-like style he arrived right in front of Platt and letting drive with a rising shot had the satisfaction of opening the score for his side. Following this McCurdy was compelled to concede a corner when Birkes was well placed, but nothing came of the award and Luton took up the running. Being hard pressed Atterbury miskicked and Schofield got away nicely, causing a regular mix-up of the home defence, Ling coming out of goal to relieve the danger, missed the ball, and Barnes appeared a certain scorer when he was seized by the Swindon goalkeeper and effectually prevented from getting to the ball. It was a clear case of a penalty, but the referee refused to pay heed to Barnes' appeals and what might have been the turning point of the game was thus decided in favour of the home team.

Bob Hawkes almost got through on one occasion but was badly fouled and Jackson, taking the kick, put the ball over to Barnes, who made a desperate effort to head it through but Gill just managed to get his goal out of danger away from almost the mouth of goal.

Luton were now doing much better, and when Schofield tricked Atterbury and raced through the home goal was greatly threatened; indeed, it was an appreciable time before the ball left the vicinity of Ling, and the Luton halves joined in the attack. Practically three-fourths of the players were in or near the penalty area, but a lucky kick away right over the heads of Luton's middle line found Birkes with the ball and only McCurdy blocked his way into goal. Platt made a gallant attempt to prevent a goal by dashing out, but could not get the ball properly and Birkes drove the ball through an absolutely open goal. It was purely a lucky goal, but, nevertheless, counted, and probably did more than anything else towards winning the match. Little more of interest took place up to the interval, excepting Schofield had a glorious chance from a pass from his partner near the half-way line, but finished badly by hitting the side of the net with his final shot.

At the commencement of the second half Luton had a greater share of the game and considerable pressure was put upon Ling's charge, but Brown's habit of lying offside spoilt opening after opening. During a hot attack Bannister got badly winded and left the field for quite a quarter of an hour. Atterbury came up into the halves and, left with one back only, the whistle was continually blowing for offside at times practically the whole forward line being in front of the Swindon halves.

Luton were attacking practically the whole fifteen minutes Bannister was off the field, but nothing came of all this effort, the best shot coming from White, who missed by inches only with a grand drive. With Bannister back Swindon once again held their own and Luton defenders were called upon to repel the dashing tactics of the home wingers. McCurdy, in attempting to get the ball away, had the misfortune to place out to Murphy on the opposite wing, and the Swindon outside-left put across a glorious cross-shot which Platt could not get at and all chance of Luton's saving the game passed away, for by this time the second half was well advanced and even if they had the ability there was not sufficient time to pile up a winning score.

But the home attack were now eager for goals and kept up a regular attack and from a corner kick still another success awarded their efforts. Platt came out to repel the original kick from the corner flag but did not get it away, and the ball was returned into the goal mouth by Birkes. Platt certainly touched the ball as it went over his hands into the net, but he really had no chance to prevent the goal. Just on time Barnes and Gittins started a promising movement, but the latter passed the ball too wide for Schofield to reach and the last chance of beating Ling went begging.

Luton lost the match through the weak attempts made by their front string to turn their opportunities to advantage. In the first half the Swindon back division were none too safe, Atterbury especially making several mistakes, giving the Luton right wing several openings, but the finish was lacking, and Ling had comparatively little to do. On the other hand the Swindon vanguard, who have youth on their side, with the exception of Wardrope, were much more dashing in their methods and when they did get through took full advantage of their good fortune.

Undoubtedly it was this difference between the two attacks which brought about the final result for all through the piece the Swindon forwards were more lively than Luton's five. Although the score against them appears to point to a weakness on the part of the Luton defence, this was scarcely a correct view of the matter, for each time the goals were the result of individual rather than collective effort.