

FOOTBALL.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. SWINDON.

Played at Swindon on Saturday. Result:—
SWINDON 4 GOALS
LUTON NIL.

The players turned out as under:—
LUTON.

Jarvis

Hogg

McCurdy

R. Hawkes

White

Jones

Rigate

F. Hawkes

Hall

Moody

Walders

O

Fenton

Warburton

Rushton

Kidd

Fleming

Chambers

Tout

Innes

Walker

Gill

Ling

SWINDON.

Referee: Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (London).

In meeting Swindon on their own ground, it was known Luton were faced with a big obstacle. Still, the improvement exhibited last week gave the stay at home supporters some hope of a turn in the away results, especially when it was known Hogg was again included after his month's absence. But those who only have the chance of seeing Swindon in their away matches have little idea of their strength when performing before their own crowd. The home side were at full strength except that Johnson was unable to turn out because of an injured thigh and in his place a local amateur in Fleming was given his first Southern League chance. It is true Bannister was an absentee, but his services were not available by order of the Football Association, who have suspended him for six weeks for that little affair on the opening day of the season at West Ham.

A lot of rain had fallen in the West during the week, but the ground was in fair going order. A strong wind was blowing and unfortunately the Luton captain lost the toss and thus the railway-men were given a distinct advantage in having the benefit of its power at their back during the early stages for as usual it dropped considerably as the day shortened and before Luton had its aid they were faced with an uphill task. There was no rain, but a lovely prospect of another heavy downfall when the teams turned out, but fortunately this held off and on the whole little fault could be found with the weather conditions except the before-mentioned gale.

The crowd gave a hearty cheer to Fleming as he stepped on the field and he received plenty of local encouragement during the progress of the game. Luton were quickly away on the left-wing and a pretty pass by Walders looked dangerous; Kidd, however, saved the situation by bringing the ball back giving Rushton a chance, but the latter's shot went wide. Swindon kept up a hot attack, Fleming and Kidd working well together. Jarvis had two or three hot shots to save and succeeded on each occasion in keeping his charge intact. A fine run up the field by the whole Luton front line was eventually checked by Walker, but only for a moment and Hall, getting possession, made another spurt and really looked like scoring, but Walker badly tripped him up inside the penalty area and strong appeals were made for a penalty, but the referee would not heed, presumably considering Walker had tackled him legitimately, although it was pretty patent from the stand the Luton player was deliberately tripped.

The ball was quickly returned to the opposite end and Fleming tried a shot which Jarvis only just saved and Kidd then had a pop but again Jarvis kept his line clear. A struggle just outside the penalty area resulted in Rushton coming to grief, being brought down by Jones, but after a temporary stoppage the home centre recovered sufficiently to take his place in the field. Two minutes later the opening goal came, Warburton putting in a shot which Jarvis appeared to knock through his own goal. Another effort on the part of Swindon almost brought about a second goal, when Fleming shot close in, but this time Jarvis saved in good style.

It was now Luton's turn and Rigate put in a beauty after a clever run, but Ling was not hampered and saved easily. But Luton could not maintain the pressure and another spurt on the part of Swindon found all their forwards well on the spot and Kidd meeting a return from McCurdy drove the ball all along the carpet into the extreme corner of the net, Jarvis being quite helpless in the matter. This was really a good goal and certainly much cleaner than the first in every way. A couple of minutes before the interval a pass from Fleming was turned into a goal by Rushton who was right on top of Jarvis and again no blame attached to Jarvis. One final effort was made by Luton to reduce the lead before retiring and Hall found himself practically clear when the referee blew his whistle for half-time. It was certainly tantalising to have about the best chance of scoring nipped in the bud in this fashion and Hall went on and took his shot with a terrific drive well over the heads of the spectators at the back of the home goal and they did not forget to jeer the Luton centre-forward, but undoubtedly if he had been allowed to finish the movement without the interference of the referee he would not have shot wildly and probably the margin would have been reduced by a goal.

Faced by a deficit of three goals, Luton set about their task in the second half in a promising manner and within the first few minutes forced a corner. By the way this was the first corner of the game. Rigate placed it accurately and Moody headed it into goal with the goal-keeper away, but Chambers was on the spot and promptly fisted it away. This was hard lines indeed for nothing else could prevent a goal, while Jones who took the penalty kick sent in well over the bar amid delighted shouts from the home crowd. Within a few minutes McCurdy handled just inside the fatal area and it was now Swindon's turn to have a penalty kick awarded. Fleming was given the task of converting but he shot straight at Jarvis and the latter knocked the ball down and before Fleming could reach it a second time managed to get it away. It was rather curious both teams should fail to take advantage of a penalty kick, but it scarcely mattered to Swindon with a big lead, while it might have meant a deal to Luton to get the encouragement a goal always brings along. Soon after Fleming, looking suspiciously offside, was allowed to put across a centre and Rushton promptly banged it through, and the referee ominously pointed to the centre of the field. But on the appeal of the Luton players, he consulted the linesman on the stand side and reversed his decision and placed the ball for a free kick giving offside against Fleming. It should be stated the linesman had given this in the first instance, but evidently the referee had not noticed his flag.

But not long after Fleming netted a fourth, after working his way towards the goal and, beating Jarvis with a cross shot, was heartily congratulated by the crowd, who appeared quite delighted with his success in this his first important match. The game was now hopeless from a Luton point of view, but from now to the finish they more than held their own. Indeed several times they appeared certain to score, but no luck came their way and the final came with an exactly similar score to last season on the same ground.

Swindon thoroughly deserved their win for except during the final quarter of an hour they were always the better side giving the spectators many thrilling moments by the manner they dashed themselves into the fray. In comparison, Luton's display was lifeless and it cannot be said anyone on their side gave a brilliant exhibition. With the exception of the first goal, Jarvis did as well as anyone. Hogg did not get going and evidently was afraid of his ankle. The halves were overworked and were scarcely effective as usual, while of the forwards the right-wing couple were the most prominent, although Walders put in two or three dangerous centres and at least one shot which deserved to score. The best feature of the game from a Luton point of view was the plucky way they played up to the finish notwithstanding the score against them and they certainly were the freshest set of players at the finish, but it was not to be expected a team could keep up the pace Swindon put in during the first half.