

Southern League.

SWINDON v. LUTON.

Played at Swindon on Saturday. Result :—

Swindon	4 goals.
Luton	nil.

The teams were as under :—

Luton—Jarvis; Hogg and McCurdy; R. Hawkes, White, and Jones; Rigate, F. Hawkes, Hall, Moody, and Walders.

Swindon—Ling; Gill and Walker; Innes, Tout, and Chambers; Fleming, Kidd, Rushton, Warburton, and Fenton.

Referee, Mr. C. C. Fallowfield (Streatham).

Luton were represented at Swindon by what is presumably their strongest side, with the exception of Pearson, but they quite failed to maintain the improvement manifested against Tottenham the previous week. In tackling the Railwaymen at Swindon they were set one of the hardest tasks in the League, for no matter how easily they curl up when away from home, Swindon can always be relied upon to offer a stubborn resistance on their own midden.

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It appears the home officials were very disappointed with the display of their team at the Crystal Palace the previous week, and several changes were made in the composition of the side. In one instance quite a new departure was made, for a trial was given to a local amateur named Fleming, who was given his chance on the result of a single game with the Reserves, when he quite delighted the crowd, and his inclusion at outside-right was very popular.

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Luton lost the toss, and this was a decided handicap, for naturally Swindon took advantage of the wind, which was pretty strong, especially in the early stages of the game. At the start Luton opened out the game in good style, and Fred Hawkes almost got through, but this did not last long, and Fenton dashed off, easily beating Hogg by heading the ball by, and before the Lutonian could turn round, had placed the ball in the mouth of goal, but his comrades were not sufficiently up to take advantage, and it went for a goal kick. A minute later Warburton was presented with a grand opportunity of opening the score, but he shot straight at McCurdy, and the latter relieved.

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Walders made a diversion and managed to get clean away on the left, and dropping in a flying centre, Ling just managed to pick it up and throw away, no other Lutonian being near enough to bustle the home goalkeeper. But it was at the other end where most danger threatened. Fleming put in a long attempt which Jarvis shaped none too well at, and the ball fell at the foot of Fenton near the upright, but he was evidently taken by surprise and weakly placed behind. With the Swindon forwards swarming round him, Jarvis did not clear the ball at all satisfactorily hereabouts, although he managed to stop any shots taking effect for the first twenty minutes.

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During a characteristic Swindon rush their centre-forward was making tracks for Jarvis in promising style, when he was brought down rather heavily by Jones, and, falling on his shoulder, it appeared at first he was seriously hurt, but after a little attention he resumed play. The resulting free kick almost brought about a goal, for Hogg miskicked, and Fenton had a glorious chance, but he could not properly control the ball, and Bob Hawkes ultimately sent it flying down the field. Still it was pretty evident a goal would not be long delayed, and it therefore caused no surprise when Warburton took a pass from Fleming and beat Jarvis with a header. The ball came awkwardly, and all the Luton goalkeeper could do was to knock it further into the net. It was by no means a clean goal, and it seemed as if it should have been stopped, but afterwards Jarvis played a safer game, and all the blame of the subsequent crushing defeat cannot be laid on his shoulders.

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Hall forced the play, but fell down when tackled, and the ball came to Walders, who let drive with a good attempt, but had the misfortune to hit the outside of the net near the upright. But an even greater misfortune befel Luton a minute later, when Hall was working nicely for a scoring position and was badly tripped by Walker inside the penalty area. Naturally, everyone expected a penalty would be awarded, but notwithstanding frantic appeals from the Luton players, nothing was given, and the game veered round in Swindon's favour. Jarvis did well to catch a hot shot from Kidd, but before he could get rid of the ball, Rushton bowled him over most unceremoniously, and it looked as if he would be bundled through the goal, but he stuck to the ball like grim death and finally threw away. It was a plucky save, and quite atoned for the former accident.

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Bob tried one of his long shorts, which at first seemed to be travelling wide, but curled in, and it was almost as much as Ling could do to reach the ball in time to prevent it finding the net. Up to this point it was anybody's game, although it is true Swindon always appeared the more dangerous when near goal, and they were constantly threatening danger by their forwards lying well up the field, Rushton especially keeping well on the Luton backs.

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Ten minutes before the interval Fenton snapped up a miskick from R. Hawkes and was away down the field in quick time, and before the Luton defence realised their danger, had planted the ball to Kidd, who scored with a regular pile-driver all along the ground. Jarvis did well to prevent still further disaster when Fleming sent in a beauty, for Rushton was practically right under the bar by the time the ball reached the goal-mouth, and it seemed nothing could stop a goal being added to Swindon's record. But it was merely delayed, for the next time Fleming landed the ball in this direction, Rushton managed to find the net from close range, and Luton were thus three goals down at the interval.

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Now that Luton had the wind in their favour they were expected to do much better, but naturally the heavy handicap of three goals told against them. Any way, they forced the first corner of the game within a minute or so of the re-start, and this should have resulted in a goal. Rigate placed the corner kick accurately, and Moody, in his familiar style, headed well into goal right away from Ling, only to have the ball knocked away by Chambers when practically over the line. A penalty kick was awarded, and for once Jones made a hash of the chance by putting yards over the top of the goal. It is not often "Abe" fails at such moments, and his chagrin would be all the greater, as it might have meant a turning point in the game.

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Curiously enough, within five minutes Jarvis was called upon to face a similar award, McCurdy being the culprit this time, although the offence happened much farther away from the danger zone; indeed, it was barely inside the penalty area. To the expressed delight of the cowl, Fleming was entrusted with the kick, although the wisdom of this was not altogether apparent, for it would have been safer to give it to a more experienced player. As it was, he put the ball straight to Jarvis, and it was promptly knocked down by Luton's custodian. For a moment it appeared Fleming would get a second kick at it, but Jarvis managed to get the ball away before it was returned towards the goal, and was congratulated by his comrades.

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Fleming next got a pass from the centre of the field, and put in a hard drive which Rushton succeeded in turning through, and the referee gave the goal without hesitation. But the linesman on the stand side was better placed to judge Fleming's position than Mr. Fallowfield, and he raised his flag immediately Fleming settled on the ball, and when consulted on the appeal of the Luton players, convinced the superior official of his view of the case, and this particular point was knocked off the list.

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But there was a fourth goal added after all, Fleming this time doing the trick on his own with a cross shot after tricking both Jones and McCurdy. This concluded the scoring. During the final quarter of an hour Luton improved wonderfully, but they could not manage to pierce a strong defence. Still it speaks well for their condition that they were going far stronger at the end of a hard ninety minutes than their opponents. Several corners were forced, and if these had been counted it would be placed on record that five were in favour of Luton, while during the whole game Swindon only managed to secure one.

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To show the alteration in the position of affairs,

at one time both Luton's backs were in the Swindon half, and Hogg forced the game with a rush up the field, but the ball eventually went into touch. It was a very near thing at the final corner, about six minutes from time. Rigate placed this finely, and Jones all but headed through; indeed, many spectators thought it had found the net, but the ball missed the upright by a few inches. Luton had a couple of free kicks for fouls against the home backs as time approached, but neither was converted, although F. Hawkes almost scored from one of them, and the teams retired with an exactly similar score to last season in the corresponding match.

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The result came about mainly through the life put into the Swindon attack during the first half, when the elements were in their favour, and Luton could never recover the ground lost. Except during the closing stages, Ling was not seriously troubled, while the home forwards were continually having a pop at Jarvis. They spread themselves out, and Rushton in particular laid himself out for individual rushes by keeping well up on the backs. Fleming and Fenton were a troublesome pair of wingers. The former gave Jones and McCurdy plenty of running about to do, and promises to develop into a clever player if he keeps his head.

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Hogg did not let himself go in his usual style, and was palpably nervous of his injured ankle. This naturally put more work on McCurdy and Jarvis. The middle line were not in such good form as against the Spurs, but they were called upon to face altogether different tactics; indeed, the contrast between the two styles of attack could not be greater. Forward, Rigate did as well as anyone, and his placing of corner kicks was very fine indeed. F. Hawkes certainly fed him nicely at times, and he put in two or three dangerous shots, without any luck whatever. Hall played clever football on occasions, but he fails to convince at critical moments and is scarcely an ideal centre.

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