

FOOTBALL

SOUTHERN LEA GUE.

LUTON TOWN v. SWINDON.

ANOTHER TWO POINTS GAINED.

A WIN UNDER TRYING CONDITIONS.

A change has come over Luton Town who have struck a winning patch. For the second week in succession have they gained a brace of points in the Southern League and a welcome improvement which should mean increased support for the club has set in. On Saturday afternoon, Swindon found their 'Waterloo' on the Bury Park ground.

The surface was greasy at the start, but rain drizzled down drearily practically right through the game until the pitch was in a trying condition before the finish. But the Town revelled in such adverse circumstances and the Cup-fighters from the railway centre found their bustling tactics useless. The Strawhatters beat them at their own tactics and though it was by a single goal they won they were value for quite a two goals' lead.

A. E. Jones of Romford, who was to have appeared as centre-forward, was absent through an injured knee and the other amateur of the front rank, W. Porter, was also away. This allowed the forward line to be the same as that at Tottenham, except that Walders did duty at outside left for the Caledonian. The attacking quintette are now showing something of an advance in form and all that they require is the infusion of more dash. Arthur Jones is spoken of as just the player possessing this quality, so the outlook for the Club is brighter now than it has been for months past.

Soon, Luton must leave that fatal second rung of the League Ladder and at the moment of writing it looks as though our near neighbours, Watford will soon take the place that the Town will vacate.

But, to return to last Saturday's match, Latheron is accommodating himself to his altered position quickly, while Moody makes a very fair centre. The rest were moderately good. They were backed by a useful set of halves, among whom Jones was a bundle of energy, and the defence was rugged.

Mr. J. B. Brodie (Stafford) had control of the following teams:—

LUTON: Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. M. Hawkes; Rigate, Rankin, Moody, Latheron and Walders.

SWINDON: Ling; Gill and Walker; Tout, Bannister, and Jones; Johnson, Fleming, Rushton, Lyons and Warburton.

Luton kicked off before a crowd of between 3,000 and 4,000 people, but it was Swindon that first got to grips, Warburton sending the ball a little above the corner. Luton's retaliation was prompt and Jones was quick to force a corner, following which Gill was temporarily placed upon the injured list. Rigate having made a promising movement hopeless by centring behind. Fleming and Johnson dashed away from the goal-kick, the former directing the ball into Platt's hands.

A bad miss by Walker was the first happening that gave the Town a real opening but Walders sent right over the bar. Moody put behind a pass from Bob Hawkes, while at the other end Platt saved cleverly an excellent attempt by Rushton. Latheron and Walders accommodated themselves to each other's style well and gave the visiting defence a feeling of anxiety that was relieved when Walders landed the ball over the crossbar.

Walker stopped a centre by Rigate but could not prevent Rankin trying to turn it to account by shooting behind. A second middle by Ling landed on Moody's head which so alarmed Ling that he left his charge to clear the centre-forward's attempt, which fell short of the mark. A corner by Bannister then forced the goalie to bring his fists into operation.

Luton had a narrow escape. A fast centre from Johnson which Hogg intercepted but Platt had to clear just as Lyons rushed in. Ling found a long, hard shot from Walders very hot and was clever to deal with another from Moody, while a second attempt by Walders landed on the outside of the net, and Rankin kicked the wrong side of the upright. For a few minutes Swindon had to content themselves with only ten men through the absence of Rushton, but he quickly resumed and just after his appearance, missed the post with a pile-driver.

Yet again was Rushton forced to leave his place, this time through an injury, but the attentions of the trainer speedily set him right. A free-kick taken by Abe Jones landed the ball close to Walders, whose centre was so dangerous that Ling promptly cleared the ball out of the reach of the Luton forwards with his fists. A second place-kick entrusted to Hogg almost brought about the downfall of the Swindon goal, Latheron heading a trifle wide of the target. Ling only saved a fine cross-shot from the same player by tipping it over the bar and the interval arrived with the score-sheet quite clean.

Sensation was provided when the whistle sounded for the second half. Latheron slipped at the critical moment when he had what looked like a certainty and a penalty against Swindon for hands aroused hopes in the breasts of the crowd. Walders took the kick but shot the ball within the reach of Ling, who saved. Warburton having missed the opposite post, Rushton sent behind and the Town replied with an effort by Rankin that caused the visiting goalie a good deal of worry.

Ten minutes from the restart the pitiless rain poured down so heavily upon the already drenched players that the referee ordered an adjournment to the dressing-rooms only to return a few minutes later when the storm was less severe. The wind blew fitfully the length of the ground and gave Luton an advantage which they were not slow to take and the Swindon defence was fully extended.

Moody was taking the ball through the ranks of his opponents when he was brought down in a fashion that made the crowd appeal in vain for the usual punishment for fouling. Ling found a shot by Latheron difficult to deal with. Swindon retorted but Warburton's aim was not sure enough. In another period of pressure, the railwaymen were blessed with good luck when Gill accidentally got in the way of a neat attempt by Moody.

Ling found himself unable to keep hold of a shot from Walders, but was able to get rid of it but saved well a good effort by Rigate when offside. It remained for a long-distance kick by Rankin to draw first blood, a splendid fast grounder deceiving the custodian completely fifteen minutes from the finish. Swindon then strove valiantly to get on even terms but towards the close Luton asserted their superiority again and had the better of the play, the game ending in a victory for them by 1-0.