

Southern League.

LUTON v. SWINDON.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	1 goal.
Swindon	nil.

Teams:—

Luton—Platt; Hogg and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Rigate, Rankin, Moody, Latheron, and Walders.

Swindon—Ling; Gill and Walker; Tout, Bannister, and Jones; Johnson, Fleming, Rushton, Lyon, and Warburton.

Referee, Mr. J. B. Brodie (Stafford).

It was unfortunate that the attendance at Luton's first home match for a month should be spoilt by the bad weather, for, as everyone knows, money is none too plentiful so far as the Luton F.C. is concerned. There were about four thousand spectators, and the game was a very good one considering the conditions; it rained all the time, and early in the second half the downpour was so violent that the referee stopped the game for a minute or two.

The result of the match was satisfactory, inasmuch as it gave two points for Luton, but the goal was scored late in the game, when almost everybody was expecting that the result would be a pointless draw. Luton were rather the better team in the first half, and their superiority was clearly manifested after the interval, but somehow the goals never came along as they should have done.

Moody kicked off and the Swindon left wing were the first to get away, but the final centre went behind. After Rigate had been given offside, Rushton put in a shot which went just over the corner of the goal. At the other end Jones forced a corner, and in the resulting play Latheron should have passed out to his wing partner, but waited to get in a shot, and the effort was frustrated.

Gill was hurt almost directly afterwards, but continued playing. A run on the Swindon right left the inside man with an opening, but Platt saved. For Luton, Walders got the better of Gill and then sent over with a good shot. Platt having saved finely from Rushton, Luton went away, and a free kick was awarded for a foul on F. Hawkes, Ling saving Moody's header.

From a corner the Swindon goal had a narrow escape. Moody was a second too late in trying to meet the ball with his head, and F. Hawkes slipped as he was about to kick. The most dangerous incident, however, occurred at the town end, where Hogg miskicked after Lyon had shot, and the ball was going into goal when Platt pounced on it, effecting a very smart save.

Shots from Walders and Moody were negotiated by Ling, and then Swindon took up the attack, being helped by a free kick and a corner, both given by Jones. Moody was next fouled as he was getting clear. Another free kick followed for a foul on F. Hawkes, and both Moody and Latheron attempted to steer the ball into the net by means of their heads, but it went wide. Shortly before the interval Latheron put in a fast rising shot which Ling was fortunate in saving at the expense of a corner.

In the second half both sides tried hard to obtain what would in all probability prove to be the winning goal, and the players controlled the ball very well indeed, considering the slippery state of the ground. Both goals had had narrow escapes before the interval, but in the second half Ling had a much more exciting time than Platt, who, however, saved some fine shots during the course of the game.

Following a good piece of play by Rankin, the ball went across to Latheron, who was only a yard or so out and had an open goal, but he slipped over before he could kick. Then there was a melee near goal, and Gill handled. The penalty was entrusted to Walders, who shot straight at Ling and the custodian easily cleared. After Platt had saved from the Swindon right-half, McCurdy headed out a rather dangerous shot from the left.

More or less interesting play followed, and when Swindon became very aggressive, Luton players happened to get in the way of the shots. Ten minutes after the re-start the referee stopped the game on account of the heavy downpour of rain, but the players were not off the field more than a couple of minutes. By this time the clothing of several of the men was liberally bespattered with mud, and the contrasts were not altogether pleasing to the eye.

Shortly after the players returned, McCurdy shot from near the half-way line, and the ball went remarkably near the mark. Ling caught a good attempt by Rigate, and then a header by Moody went to Walders, who shot just wide. Latheron also tested Ling, and after the Swindon outside-left had mulled a splendid chance by shooting wide, Moody again became prominent with his headers.

Later on one of Walders' hard shots gave the goalkeeper some trouble, for the ball

bounced from his hand, but none of the other forwards were near enough to take advantage of the opportunity. A foul by McCurdy resulted in a corner for Swindon, but this was cleared. And then the only goal of the match was scored.

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It happened a quarter of an hour before the finish and was rather unexpected. The Luton right wing made the running, and Rankin eluded Bannister when about twenty-five yards from goal. The inside-right at once made up his mind to shoot. The low shot, although with plenty of force behind it, might not have beaten Ling on a fine day, but he was unable to get at the greasy ball, and it found the corner of the net.

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After this Luton played as though they meant to keep the lead in spite of everything. They played a defensive game, and although Swindon came within an ace of success once or twice, they had not scored when the game finished. On one occasion Jones relieved after McCurdy had miskicked, and in the last few minutes Hogg cleared from a corner which he had given.

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Luton's win was all the more satisfactory, because when they visited Swindon early in the season the railway men were all over them, in fact, the local men—except perhaps in the Cup-tie with Fulham—have never been so much outclassed as they were on that occasion. On Saturday the play was pretty even in the first half, but in the second Luton deserved more than a goal advantage. Platt, however, had a good deal to do, but he was in splendid form and made not the semblance of a mistake.

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Of the others, perhaps Jones was the outstanding player, and may fairly be said to have been the best man on the field, though Moody ran him very close for honours. Moody, indeed, played a great game, and his muddy condition at the close of the play testified to the amount of work he had got through. The left wing was not altogether satisfactory. Walders played a fairly good game, but once threw away a certain goal by shooting from an awkward angle when he might have passed to the front, where two other Luton forwards were quite clear. Latheron is not in his element at inside-left.