

LUTON FOOTBALL NOTES.

By "The Goalie."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON VISIT THE CHAMPIONS.

SWINDON FULLY EXTENDED.

In view of Luton's recent form, there were people who predicted all sorts of bad things from the visit of the team to Swindon. The best that could be expected, they said, was a defeat with the probability of a big score against them, but as in every away match, the Blues demonstrated that their position in the lower part of the League table is false, and they gave Swindon the fright of their lives. Luton had all the better of the first half, and deservedly led by 1-0, in spite of Bob Hawkes missing a penalty and the referee passing over another bad offence in the sacred area. Then for thirteen minutes in the second half Swindon "saw red," and after the equalising goal had been registered, an extremely doubtful point, three more goals were added. Luton were not done with, however, and undismayed by the score against them they scored another goal in the closing stages. It was a defeat that brought honour with it, and as Shakespeare said "The play's the thing." This is a rather consoling way of putting it, but very few people will deny that Luton performed very creditably, and maybe this is the turning of the tide. As Leyton drew and New Brompton lost, Luton are still third from the bottom of the table.

Acting with commendable generosity towards an old and valued servant, the Swindon directors gave the whole of the proceeds of the match with Luton to Bannister, and as subscription lists had been widely circulated he should be able to make a substantial addition to his banking account. The Swindon captain, who played a remarkably good game, has spent seventeen years in first class football. In spite of this he is as nimble as a schoolboy, and likely to be a sterling centre-half for a good many seasons.

Though Swindon managed to win by 4-2, the spirits of their supporters were at a very low level at half-time, for it is very rare that a visiting team gets the lead at the railway centre. What is more, Luton deserved it, for Swindon, facing the wind, had done little that was worthy of their reputation. They tried hard but nothing went right for them, and Luton not only held up Swindon's attack, but found time to set up a number of promising movements on their own account.

Swindon played against the sun and wind, but were quickly off the mark, Fleming and Wheatcroft going through, Naisby coming out and picking the ball from Wheatcroft's toe. Stansfield and Walker were prominent for Luton, but good defensive work by Kay and the home halves kept the visitors out. Stansfield and Moody on the left wing, adroitly assisted by the clever touches of Hawkes, made persistent raids upon the Swindon defence. Brilliant play by Bown almost produced a goal, that player receiving a return pass from Lamb, and heading just over. Then came brilliant footwork by Luton's front line and effective play by Bannister and Kay preventing Swindon's downfall. Luton's forwards, well backed by Bob Hawkes, showed great pertinacity in the neighbourhood of Swindon's goal, Skiller getting fine shots from Brown, Walker, and Bob Hawkes.

At the other end Fleming and Bown made fast raids on Luton's goal Potts coming to the rescue each time. Luton then suffered two strokes of misfortune, a clever shot by Brown rebounding from the cross-bar, and a palpable case of a penalty against Walker, Swindon's back, passing unnoticed. Amends were made by the referee a minute later, when he awarded Luton a penalty for a charge. Bob Hawkes treated himself to the kick, but Skiller effected a wonderful left-hand save. Luton enjoyed the best portion of the game till the interval, and about five minutes from the end, Stansfield swung the ball into the centre for Johnson to catch Kay and Walker in a hesitating mood, and beat Skiller with a capital shot. Swindon made a confident appeal for a penalty without effect. Half-time: Luton 1, Swindon 0.

The locals had failed to please their friends in the first half, but they soon had the crowd cheering when operations were resumed, and Luton were given a taste of the real Swindon. The fun commenced five minutes after the re-start. Lamb drove hard into goal, and the ball struck the bottom part of the bar before rebounding to Potts, who cleared. The referee was satisfied that it was a good goal, but Luton protested vehemently, though vainly, against the point. Then Fleming and Wheatcroft went through, and the former drew Naisby out of goal and gave his side the lead. A third goal quickly followed, Naisby saving from Lamb, only to be beaten by Bown.

Luton fought an uphill battle with great spirit, but were outplayed, and Naisby did many brilliant things before Wheatcroft put on a fourth goal. This was a singular point, for the ball struck the bar and then went off the goalkeeper's back into the net. Luton's efforts were rewarded before the finish with a goal from Walker, thus making the score:—

SWINDON 4, LUTON 2.