

LUTON v. SWANSEA.

Opportunism and Luck.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Luton	5 goals.
Swansea	nil.

Teams:—

Luton: Mitchell; Elvey and Robinson; Fred Hawkes, Frith and Bob Hawkes; Durrant, Wileman, Simms, Rollinson and Hoar.

Swansea: Storey; Allman and Bulcock; Duffy, Bassett and Cubberley; Messer, Brown, Weir, Ball and Swarbrick.

Referee: Mr. C. Lutwyche (Birmingham).

Gate receipts, £205. Attendance, about 8,000.

No one anticipated such a result. We all thought that the big scoring matches were over for this season, because all the minor Welsh clubs had been dealt with, more or less severely. It was strange that while Ton Pentre escaped with only two goals against them, Swansea, the best Second Division team in Wales, should suffer to the extent of five goals. But it was the same old tale of good and bad fortune. On several occasions it has been against Luton. Their shots would hit the post or anywhere but inside the net. On Saturday the luck was with Luton. Swansea hit the crossbar, but Luton got the ball into the net. Not only that Swansea had cause for complaint about the referee's decisions. In fairness to the visiting players, that is bound to be said. Wileman was well offside when he received the ball and scored the last goal, while it seemed pretty certain that the corner which led to Simms scoring the fourth was due to Simms pulling the goalkeeper and the ball over the line.

The game was much more even than the score indicates. In midfield play Swansea were nearly as good as Luton, and on the total play the home team deserved to win by two or three goals to nil. Where Luton surpassed Swansea was in their opportunism. They were much sharper near goal, and it was that that gave Luton the lead and added so much to their confidence, that when once they began to score they looked like running up a big figure. The first minute or so of the game might easily have been fatal to Luton. Elvey was hard pressed. Robinson rushed across impetuously with the result that between them they lost the ball and Weir got it. The hearts of Lutonians almost stood still. That terribly important first goal seemed certain to be registered against the home team. Weir dashed on, with only Mitchell to beat. He then shot hard. The ball went over the bar. The relief to the thousands of Luton supporters was great.

There was another incident, too, that might easily have meant not only the defeat of Luton by Swansea but the ruin of Luton's chances of promotion for the season. It was after Luton had got their first and only goal in the first half and there was still some time to go to the interval. Ball worked up the field and forced a corner. The kick was well taken and there was a rush on the Luton goal. The ball was cleared, and then it was seen that Mitchell and Brown were having a disagreement. What Brown had done to Mitchell, I don't know, but the Luton goalkeeper kicked at Brown, who was on the ground. The referee hurried up and seemed to direct Mitchell to go off. He then laid his hand on his shoulder and led him away from the other players. There was an angry yell by the

crowd behind that goal. Some of the Luton players spoke to the referee, but he waived them aside. After some moments of great excitement he came to the decision to allow Mitchell to stay on. There was immediately a great cheer. It is said that Brown himself and Duffy, the vice-captain, appealed to the referee to allow Mitchell to stay on. Had Mitchell gone off, it might have meant the collapse of Luton then and the effect would have been felt for the remainder of the season. Mitchell has hitherto shown such admirable self-control that it was most unexpected to see him mixed up in such an affair, and one could not help thinking that there must have been something to upset him badly.

It was a clever twist by Simms that secured Luton's goal in the first half. Hoar placed the ball nicely in front of the goal. Storey ran out and seemed certain to get it, but Simms dived forward, got his head down to the ball, which was breast-high, and just turned it by Storey into the net. It was a smart piece of work. Up to this time there had been a considerable amount of fear that Swansea might score first, for there was no mistaking the fact that they were a good team. Every now and then they came away with a rush, but Elvey and Robinson, after their initial misunderstanding, were as firm as rocks. The Luton forwards were much more likely to score on getting near goal, for their shots were better directed. Simms and Wileman made some good attempts, and once Fred Hawkes, from long range, drove in a splendid shot which skimmed the bar. A pass from Hoar to Simms was the first part of a movement which led to three corners against Swansea, and even then the visitors' cleared their lines and brought Elvey and Robinson into action. Storey made a fine save from a fast shot by Wileman before Simms eventually put Luton ahead. Elvey had a chance of giving Luton a two goal lead when he took a penalty for a foul by Allman on Hoar, but the ball was sent over.

The match was by no means certain for Luton until some distance on in the second half, for Swansea played with great determination. Weir was always dangerous. Once he made a splendid attempt, dashing between the backs and putting in a capital shot, but the ball hit the front of the crossbar. There was a great struggle round the goal, and the ball was cleared only by Elvey's herculean efforts. He got it from amongst the clump of players and fought his way with it a considerable distance up the field before disposing of it with a big kick. Luton seemed to be gradually getting the upper hand. Bob and Fred Hawkes were both playing a fine game, and Simms and Wileman kept bothering the Swansea defence. Hoar was also dropping in shots from the left with rare aim. Then Durrant put the ball in neatly to Wileman, who screwed it into the net to the goalkeeper's right. Storey got his extended fingers to it, but there was too much twist on the shot, and the ball curled into the corner of the net. It was one of those capital quick shots of Wileman's.

The goals had begun to arrive. Durrant, who had run into the centre position, put in a rising shot which Storey turned over the bar. Hoar took the corner kick and Fred Hawkes headed inward, Rollinson completing the movement by heading it into the net to Storey's left. The fourth has been aptly described as having been converted by Simms after he had scored a try. It was certainly of that nature. Wileman put the ball forward and Durrant turned it in towards goal. It was near the post and Storey was attempting to clear when Simms grasped him and pulled the goalkeeper and the ball over the line. One was astonished to see the referee signal a corner. Simms having got the ball over the line in that fashion, met the corner kick and put in a quick shot which left Storey helpless. Fred Hawkes stopped a fine run by Weir, after which came Luton's fifth goal. Wileman was offside and unmarked when he got the ball, but there was no doubt about the shot being a good one.

For a good part of the match it was anybody's game, and Swansea must have felt very disappointed at such a pile of goals against them, for they are a good side. Storey was not up to Mitchell's standard, but for all that he is a valuable player. Bulcock, the recently-acquired back from Crystal Palace, was not striking. Allman was considerably better. He is considered by the Swansea critics to be the mainstay of the Swansea team. His treatment of Hoar once or twice, though, was of the style that the best kind of player avoids. The half backs were a hard working set, but could not compare with the Luton trio. Frith did not shine so much as usual, but Bob and Fred Hawkes were very good, particularly Fred. The visiting forwards were not so smart near goal as the Luton five. However, Weir was a capital centre-forward. He was always on the watch for openings and had a lot of dash. Rollinson was not in the picture a great deal, but Hoar played a fine game in spite of being so keenly watched by Allman. Simms, Wileman and Durrant were very good. Elvey and Robinson gave a grand display. As a pair they are playing better than they ever did, and Elvey could hardly be over praised for his game on Saturday.