

Luton Draw with Swindon.

Four Goals Shared with the Champions

[By CRUSADER].

"I hope it will be a good game, and may the better team win," was the sportsmanlike wish expressed by Harold Fleming, in a letter which I received from him on Saturday morning. The Swindon captain had been hoping to play, and up to Friday it was an open question, but at midday he was still feeling the effects of a slight strain, so it was decided that it would be inadvisable for him to play. It was a pity he was absent from the team, for he would no doubt have made the game still more interesting, but it was wiser for the international to rest. His hope that it might be a good game was realised. It was the most interesting seen at Luton this season, and this was all the more gratifying because there was such a large crowd present. It was estimated at 9,000, including 3,000 Territorials.

The name of Swindon, present champions, and champions of a previous season, as well as famous cup-fighters, no doubt proved the attraction not only to the civilian population, but to the soldiers, who came in much larger numbers than they have done for some time. In fact, so great was the press on the Territorial side of the ground that the barrier was broken down in two places. The first occasion was towards the end of the first half, when there was a very exciting turn in front of the Luton goal. Mitchell had stopped a shot by Denyer, but before the goalkeeper could recover another Swindon player attempted to score. Dunn, who had dropped back into goal, beat the ball down with his hands, and the referee ordered a penalty. At the same moment the barrier gave way, and play had to be stopped until this was temporarily put right. When Tout took the kick he sent wide.

As to the latter part of Harold Fleming's wish, the result was perhaps in accordance with desire. I know there are a good many who think that Luton deserved to win, but Luton had the advantage of ground, and Swindon played a capital game. In their team, there were no such defined weaknesses as in the Luton side. Swindon, in the matter of combination, were the better team, but by certain individualistic work, the Luton men somewhat counterbalanced the total effect. The Swindon men are mostly of considerable experience. In fact, some critics consider that to maintain their success of previous seasons, Swindon ought to leaven their side with younger men. There is little doubt that it would greatly improve the team. On the other hand, Luton, in defence, could do with a few players like those of Swindon—a good, solid, hard-working back or half, who would be a steadying influence on the others, such a man as Silto, for instance.

On Saturday the teams were:—

Luton: Mitchell; Elvey and Dunn; F. Hawkes, Frith, and R. Hawkes; Macfarlane, Wileman, Simms, Rollinson, and Roberts.

Swindon: Skiller; Kay and Milton; Tout, Silto, and Handley; Jefferson, Batty, Denyer, Bown, and Bolland.

The referee was Mr. T. Kirkham (Burslem), and the result—

Luton	2 goals.
Swindon	2 goals.

Gate receipts £196.

The pace of the first half was great. The value of getting in the first blow was realised by Swindon, who scored in the first minute. The principal feature of Jefferson's work has always been his speed, and we had an example of it on Saturday. The ball was passed out to him, and away he went full pelt. He eluded Dunn's rush, and then had a clear field. He dropped the ball well in front of goal. Fred Hawkes had run back, but before he could tackle Denyer, the Swindon centre-forward had headed in. One could not help wondering whether the champions had suddenly struck their top form, and Luton were to be the chopping block, for in the very next minute Jefferson had repeated his run in very similar fashion. This time it was Bown who accepted the centre, and Mitchell made a great save by singling himself at the ball.

As not infrequently occurs after such opening bouts, there was a big swing in the reverse direction, and the Luton men played really well. For a considerable time they were on top of the leaders, and the Swindon halves and backs were cramped into a small space. The equaliser seemed absolutely assured once when Simms slipped through an opening in the defence, but he could not stop to steady himself, and did not catch the ball properly on his foot. The result was that the shot was not a full-power one, and though it was straight, Skiller had no great difficulty in disposing of it. Simms' shot, a little later, though, was a terror. He had got over a little to the right, and seeing a chance he drove the ball towards the goal with a terrific kick. Skiller had quite a handful. Roberts had a great deal to do with the equaliser, but it was Simms who put the finishing touch. Roberts was a bit too quick for Tout, and swung the ball across. The Swindon defence blocked the way in front of goal, so Fred Hawkes sent the ball back to the left again. Roberts placed it forward to Simms, whose shot was altogether too quick for the Swindon defence.

Jefferson gave Dunn a very tiring afternoon. It is interesting to speculate what would have happened on that side had Fleming been playing, for although Batty has many times proved an exceedingly capable substitute for the international, his show as an individual player on Saturday was nothing like that usually given by Fleming. However, his good forward passes enabled Jefferson to show his pace, and several times Frith had to run back to assist in defence. Whether his action was always judicious is doubtful. At times he was apt to impede those players whose main business is to defend.

The forwards did not have so much assistance from their centre-half as they should, because Frith does more in defence than in assisting the attack. The majority of the latter assistance fell to Bob and Fred Hawkes, who must have been nearly tired out before the second half was very old.

For all that, there were occasions when things might have gone very wrong if Frith had not sprang back very quickly towards goal to support the backs. In the period in the second half which included Swindon's second goal, however, he got too near Mitchell. The Luton defence had been kept on the run through the ball being swung from one wing to the other. Jefferson just kept it from going over the line and put it across the goal. Bolland then saved it from going out, and though almost even with the goal he sent in a capital shot. Mitchell had no one in front of him to unight him, but Frith, in his anxiety to defend the goal, was right up to his side. By some means, the players must have confused one another, for the shot ought to have been saved. But though Mitchell went down and got his hands to it, the ball just rolled in at a right angle.

That was eleven minutes after the second half had commenced. The incident of the missed penalty occurred in the first half. In that instance, Mitchell made a very plucky save from the foot of Denyer. Tout has had plenty of experience with penalty kicks, and it was his attempt at a deceptive shot that caused him to miss. After placing the ball for the penalty kick, he walked away from it, and then suddenly swerved round and kicked. In doing that he must have lost his bearings a bit, for his shot went wide of the post, and Dunn, who had previously stopped a shot with his hand, leapt about in front of goal with great delight. At the opening of the second half, Macfarlane forced a corner, and after the ball had been repelled, Bob Hawkes, standing back some distance, tried one of his very strong surprise shots. It is doubtful whether Skiller ever saw the ball, but he instinctively threw up his hands and tipped the ball over the bar. Another run by Macfarlane resulted in Swindon having another narrow escape. His shot was turned in towards the goal by a Swindon man, and Skiller just managed to twist the ball around the post.

Rollinson had done very little during the match, and after Swindon's second goal he retired for a time. It was then found that he had received an injury at the bottom of his left ribs in the first five minutes of the game, and had difficulty in breaking. He returned to the field later, but he was greatly handicapped. It was while he was off that Luton equalised for the second time. Tout thought he could baffle Roberts by a feint, but it did not come off. In fact, Roberts got the better of the Swindon right half, and sent the ball across capitally. Macfarlane gave it to Wileman, who drove in a very hard shot. Skiller tried to smother it, but the ball rolled away after striking him, and before Skiller could get it again, Simms had placed it into goal. The home team had the better of the remainder of the game, though in the last few minutes Mitchell made one great save.

The best man on the Luton side undoubtedly was Simms, for he gave the Swindon defence a great deal of bother. He made some slips, as a very bustling forward must unless he is a genius, and it has to be remembered, too, that Simms was not particularly well supported. Rollinson's reduced effectiveness has been explained, but the other inside forward, Wileman, has not yet reproduced his best form. Macfarlane shows promise, but needs more experience. Roberts, although doing well, was less successful than usual, but he gave the Swindon defence a very good run. Elvey was the safer of the two backs, but did not always kick clearly. Kay was the better of the Swindon pair. The half-back line was good. The inside forwards did not give an outstanding display. It was the wingers, Jefferson and Bolland (particularly the former) who gained prominence, though Denyer was a very smart centre.

Brighton and Hove, 2; Millwall, 2.
Crystal Palace, 1; Portsmouth, 0.
Cardiff City, 2; Queen's Park Rangers, 0.
Luton, 2; Swindon, 2.
Norwich City, 1; Croydon Common, 1.
Plymouth Argyle, 6; Southampton, 2.
West Ham United, 3; Reading, 2.
Gillingham, 0; Bristol Rovers, 1.
Exeter City 7; Southend United 1.
Watford 0, Northampton 0.

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

(Including Saturday's matches).

	Goals						
	P.	W.	L.	D.	F.	A.	Pts
Brighton	13	8	2	3	16	10	19
Reading	13	8	3	2	25	15	18
Millwall	11	7	2	2	19	11	16
Watford	12	6	2	4	17	9	16
Exeter City	11	6	3	2	21	13	14
Swindon Town	12	5	3	4	22	19	14
West Ham United..	12	6	4	2	21	20	14
Portsmouth	13	5	4	4	15	12	14
Cardiff City	11	6	4	1	15	8	13
Northampton	11	5	3	3	16	13	13
Luton	15	5	7	3	25	32	13
Plymouth Argyle ..	12	3	5	4	20	19	10
Bristol Rovers	13	4	7	2	21	29	10
Southend United ..	11	3	5	3	11	14	9
Norwich City	11	2	4	5	12	18	9
Queen's Park R'gers	12	2	5	5	12	18	9
Southampton	12	4	7	1	22	30	9
Crystal Palace	11	2	6	3	10	18	7
Croydon Common ..	12	2	7	3	10	18	7
Gillingham	12	2	8	2	14	18	6