

THE SWINDON DEBACLE.

I do not propose to say much about the debacle at Swindon. I am sure everybody will agree after last night's gallant fight—yes, fight—criticism was disarmed. The matter is pretty fairly dealt with below, except that the accident to Semple quite early in the game, is omitted. He got a nasty blow in the groin, and was in considerable pain for the remainder of the day and on Sunday. It would be wrong to deny that many hopes were shattered by the news on Saturday night. Consternation reigned in the town, and I was glad to be able to correct a few of the hasty critics who were blaming Watson, of course, before they knew very much about it. As a matter of fact the Luton captain was sympathetically cheered for his display, and he had no chance with any shot that scored, while he got in the way of some that might well have counted. Nearly every goal was obtained from less than ten yards' range, and if any man thinks he has a chance against men like Fleming and Betty at such a range, there is something wrong with his thought apparatus. The shot sent in by Mathieson, giving Swindon their ninth goal, was from 30 yards, but Watson had no chance with it, and it was nothing short of a mystery how the forward came to do it.

Saturday's game was a lesson, however, and the directors, knowing the weak places, will not, I am sure, allow matters to go beyond recovery. Whatever the cost, Luton Town must avoid danger of relegation.

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Our Swindon correspondent says:—

"The only enlightenment I can give is that the Luton defence crumpled up badly. Last season Elvey gave a great display at Swindon, and it was obvious very early on that Luton

Jamie Watson was taken to the Bute Hospital very quickly after half-time, and then he was examined by Dr. Archibald and Dr. Bell. As a result he was promptly placed under chloroform, and his shoulder, which had been dislocated, was restored to position. So expeditiously was the work carried out that Watson had recovered consciousness and lost much of the pain before the match was ended, and very soon after the players had left the field he was informed of the result by Dr. Archibald. Half an hour later he was removed home.

had nothing like the defence they had last season. Even that defence, however, could not have coped with the brilliant attack of Swindon. Fleming reached his very best form, and he was quite as good on Saturday as he has ever been in his long and magnificent career. He was simply irresistible, and his example was infectious. Time and again he led his men through the opposition with an ease, speed and judgment that could not have been surpassed by any living player. The Luton defenders strove desperately hard to check the home vanguard, but they were either swept aside or circumvented by sheer skill.

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"We in Swindon had heard much of this vaunted Scottish defence, but, always excepting Watson, it was too slow. Of the halves and backs, Parker was the only man who seemed capable of giving and taking hard knocks with equanimity. The others were not vigorous enough because they were not strong enough, and both Lennon and Semple appeared to be all at sea with the electric rushes of the home forwards. They were too deliberative, if I may use the word, and seldom appeared to grasp the intentions of the opponent. It seemed to me that they moved and worked along lines too orthodox, and anyone who knows Fleming knows that his success in football is due to the fact that he has never been an orthodox player. There was altogether too much fire in the Swindon attack for the slow Scots, and I have never seen, long as my experience has been, men so utterly and hopelessly non-plussed as were Lennon and Semple. For Watson one cannot have anything but the highest praise, and there was for him at the finish something approaching an ovation from the crowd. Many a time he had the hopeless task of facing single-handed a line of forwards who had left his colleagues

outpaced and out-generalled, and he had no chance to save one of the shots that scored. A more unenviable task no goalkeeper has ever had on Swindon's ground since professionalism was adopted.

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"It is more than possible that Luton people may be inclined to divide the Luton team, but they need not. Luton could not adapt themselves to the Swindon style of play, and that was why the damage was so extensive. Of Luton's halves I would say a good word. Lamb appeared to be quite a class player until he got injured, and Roe gave many pretty touches, while Parker was unsparing of himself. After the first two goals, however, they seemed undecided whether to concentrate on defence, so their forwards suffered. Parker was the most powerful of the trio, even if he had not the cleverness of the other two. Of the forwards, Simms was the one who took the eye most, and that was probably because his style of play is beloved of Swindon football followers as a whole. He was not so clever as

either Mathieson or Bradley, and the latter struck one as being particularly skillful in ball manipulation. Simms was always trying hard, and his success was deserved. His goal was a really fine effort, for he gave the home keeper no chance whatever. Mathieson and Bookman were the cleverer wing, and the big man and his little colleague won applause for several tricky bits of play before half-time. Pett was not capable of taking advantage of his colleagues' skill, and there was a lack of understanding along the line generally.

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"Man for man, Swindon were superior in every way, and I fancy that the team has been solidified by the new blood in the middle and back divisions. The passing to the forwards was delightful, and there was nothing wrong with the obstructionist tactics. Nash had comparatively little to do in goal, so well covered was he by Kay and Macconachie, while Wareing was fully the best of a sound middle line. The forwards I have referred to, and I shall anticipate another couple of points for Swindon at Luton next Saturday unless Luton have resources from which to improve very considerably upon the team they brought to Swindon.

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"Batty opened the score after six minutes after a clever pass by Rogers. Then Macconachie, by brainy work, gave Davies a chance to run through and score. Fleming then got the first of his four goals after cleverly outwitting Semple, and put on the fourth when Lamb had retired for repairs. Simms then got a good goal for Luton, picking up a pass from Parker and giving Nash no chance. Hawley missed a penalty, shooting past. At half-time, Swindon led by 5-1. In the second half Batty, Jefferson and Fleming scored for Swindon, and to complete the humiliation, Mathieson sent the ball past Watson from 25 yards range."

SWINDON	9 goals
LUTON TOWN	1 goal

Teams:—

Swindon: Nash; Kay, Macconachie; Langford, Hawley, Wareing; Jefferson, Fleming, Rogers, Batty, Davies.

Luton Town: Watson; Lenson, Semple; Rea, Lamb, Parker; Pett, Bradley, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.

Referee: F. W. Cooper, London.