

FOOTBALL NOTES

(By CRUSADER.)

LUTON TOWN'S REVENGE.

Swindon Go Under in Return Match.

LUTON TOWN	2 goals.
SWINDON TOWN	nil.

Luton Town: Bailey; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneaux, Parker, Cockerill; Hoar, Higginbotham, Simms, Mathieson, Bookman.
Swindon: Nash; Kay, Maconnachie; Langford, Hawley, Wareing; Jefferson, Skoko, Rogers, Denyer, Davies.

Referee: D. W. F. Cooper, London.

None of us ever thought that the Town would manage to take full toll of Swindon's defence to the same extent as the Wiltshire men put Watson and Co. through in the opening match, but a few of us realised that the experience was not a true indication of the merits of Luton, and we thought it was quite on the cards that the Town would get the points in the return fixture last Saturday. So they did, and fully deserved them. They were the better side because they were stronger and able to maintain a punishing pace for ninety minutes. Indeed, both against Portsmouth and Swindon, the Town players appeared to be more than equal to the opposition in stamina and strength, although lacking many of the finer phases. On Saturday they were a long way below the visitors in the matter of passing, but they made up for it by strong, swift rushes, and it occurred to me in the second half that if only they can acquire a little combination as well, they will be likely to improve on the Cup-tie record. It must not be forgotten that the forward line is comparatively new, for Mathieson only had a couple of games last season, while during Higginbotham's turn the changes were frequent, and if the same forward line appeared in two games it was something to talk about. Then again, of last year's eleven only one man behind the forward line remains, and while I want to pay tribute to the excellent work of the young blood, I am not yet satisfied that it is up to the level we require to meet with anything worthy the name of success this season. That matter, however, is having close attention from the directors, and we may look forward to considerable improvement if the support given in the opening fortnight is maintained.

The two goals that decided the issue on Saturday were both questioned by Swindon. The first was a penalty kick which I thought was rather a mistake, for it did not appear to me that Hawley handled the ball intentionally. Unfortunately for the centre-half, however, the referee was close to him and promptly awarded the penalty kick, and Sid Hoar repeated his success against Portsmouth, and the Town were in front. Many times afterwards the home forwards nearly rushed the visitors' defence, but only a few minutes remained for play when Mathieson made the issue safe with a header from Hoar's centre. The referee and one linesman agreed that the scorer had headed it, but the other linesman disagreed and was strongly in favour of Swindon's vociferous protest being allowed. It was apparent from the Press box that Mathieson had his hand up when he threw himself at the ball, but I certainly thought that he headed it. Others differed.

Had Ernest Simms met with any sort of good fortune the margin would have been larger, and Sid Hoar did actually run through to score what I regarded as the best goal of the match just before the close, but he was given offside. He was

far from being in an illegal position, for he dashed past Maconnachie to snap up a dainty pass from Simms, gallop past Kay, and ram a lovely shot past Nash. It was distinctly hard lines for the winger, for it capped a fine second-half display. Even he, however, was surpassed by Simms, who reproduced his very best form, and delighted the crowd with his single-handed rushes and the manner in which he forged between the backs. He is doing the correct thing by playing hard on to the backs, and by taking an occasional shot from long range when the goalkeeper least expects it. One shot of his in the second half on Saturday was worth a dozen goals in point of merit, for Nash was beaten to the world when the ball crashed against the corner of the upright and the crossbar and rebounded into play. This is the sort of thing one gets from the highest-class centre-forward, and if Simms maintains his form he will not be a long way down the honours list. I believe that Higginbotham will have much to do with it, too, for his finesse for position and push through when the defence is down, is a great asset to the Simms' type of centre-forward. Higginbotham is crafty rather than exuberant, and he can take a lot of knocking about, too. Mathieson is rather too boisterous if anything, and he should begin to settle down a little more. He is hanging back a good deal, not from fear of the opposition, indeed, but with a view to assisting the halves, and the result is that Bookman does not get the full-time assistance he wants. These are defects that the Irishman needs to remedy, and we want to see more of that passing and constructive work in attack that he showed in the practice games. Hoar and Bookman have speed enough for any line, and when men can run in as close to goal as they did on Saturday the line is worth many more goals. Both could leave the opposition far behind on Saturday, and it must have been an eye-opener to Maconnachie and Wareing.

who toiled hopelessly in the rear of Hoar, while Langford was practically left standing when Bookman got a leg in front.

The half-back line was the best we have, and Parker played a much better game than he did on the one occasion he was tried in that position last year, but he prefers left-half. He did very good work in the second half, and both Cockerill and Molyneaux played a hard, useful game without being exceptionally brilliant. They were fast and fearless, and after the first twenty minutes the Swindon forwards were often overtaken by the superior speed of Cockerill, while Molyneaux's "never-say-die" methods irritated the Swindon left winger, Davies, to a considerable degree. For the first time the defence was unbeaten. Lennon is steadily adapting himself to a style of football new to him, and his quickness in recovery was at times quite remarkable. His length-kicking leaves something to be desired yet, but often he dropped the ball right among his forwards, and that was some advantage. Tirrell again played finely, and he was quite the most careful defender on the field, not even excepting Maconnachie. He has made good in his two games with the first eleven, and Semple, who, I am glad to say, is recovering nicely, will have a hard task to oust the old "Hammer." Bailey kept goal well, and made no sort of mistake, and if the team was successful at Portsmouth last night there will be a great welcome for them on Saturday.

Swindon directors, I fancy, have overdone the experience dodge. They have any amount of skill in the side, and two or three of the forwards have a decent turn of speed. Jefferson, of course, is hardly the flier he was a dozen years ago, but he can still move, and most of the danger on Saturday came from his side of the field. He has long been a class man, and he keeps himself so well that he looks like lasting longer than many younger men, in spite of a loss of thatch. He received good help from Stokoe, the youngster who deputised for Harold Fleming, and who is a boy to make good. His shooting was faulty, but his general play was clever, as also was that of Denyer, who played in place of Batty. Rogers was not greatly in the picture, and Davies did fine work in spasms, but he was suffering some sort of grievance, and his hand was against every man's. He asked for trouble in the second half when he collared Bailey's ankle after the keeper had dodged him. The line combined very prettily in the first twenty minutes and for a period of the second half, but shot poorly. They did not receive much assistance from the halves after the Luton team had got into their stride.

They were painfully slow at times, and Maconnachie found that his judgment was not equal to the enthusiasm of the opposition. Kay was probably the best man of the backs and half-backs, and he saved Nash a tremendous amount of trouble. The goalkeeper is a really good man and was quite free from blame. Swindon has no cause to worry over his position, but they will perhaps find it necessary to put young blood in the middle line.

They did not like the defeat, but they deserved it.