

ONE GOAL DID IT!

SWANSEA GET REVENGE ON LUTON TOWN.

(By CRUSADER.)

At Swansea.

SWANSEA TOWN 1 goal

LUTON TOWN Nil

SWANSEA. — Denoon; Morley, Milne; Collins, Harwood, Williams; Hole, Deacon, Smith, Thompson; Spottiswoode.

LUTON. — Gibbon; Lennon, Tirrell; Molyneux, Jennings, Roe; Higginbotham, Butcher, Reid, Irvine, Clarkson.

Referee: Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.

There is a saying that blood is thicker than water, and generally speaking it must be agreed that football crowds are no exception to the rule. But whatever may be said of Luton's football followers, I am bound to say that they have nothing to learn in the matter of sportsmanship from any crowd in the Southern Section of the League, for, often at the expense of the Town team, they praise a visiting side that manages to win at Luton. I have never yet known that happen in Wales, and seldom elsewhere for that matter, but I have seldom known a football crowd so ungenerous and so hostile as Swansea's for no apparent reason other than that they have been beaten. And it was not because their favourites had been beaten at home, but because they had lost by 6-1 at Luton. Never in the history of that club had six goals been registered against them in one game, and not only in Swansea, but in Cardiff soon after our arrival late on Friday night, we were shown unmistakably that the whole of Wales had suffered something in the nature of a collapse last Saturday week night in consequence of the result at Luton. That frightful defeat the Town suffered at Swindon in the first game of season 1920-21 created nothing like the sensation in Luton that this 6-1 defeat of Swansea evoked, and from the bitterness apparent in Swansea itself one would imagine that they had never expected to suffer to that extent.

Of itself defeat is not a thing of which anyone need be ashamed, for honourable failure is preferable to success won by unscrupulous methods, and I don't think there was one spectator of the game on the Luton Town ground who did not feel sympathetic towards Swansea, and that their play generally was underserving of so crushing a result. Swansea, however, did not take it that way, and they appear to have alarmed everybody and everything except the right thing. And that was why the official match card at Swansea contained an offensive paragraph reflecting not only on the referee but the Luton players. It was calculated to have an adverse effect on the crowd, and this was promptly pointed out to the Swansea officials by Mr. E. E. Gibbs, with the result that Manager Bradshaw came and apologised to the Luton players and

DISAVOWED RESPONSIBILITY

before the game was started. How he could escape the latter in view of the fact that the card is "Published by the Swansea Town Football Club," it is hard to understand, and unless it is the custom of the Swansea crowd to boo and hoot the visitors every time they do something that does not assist Swansea, then the effect of that paragraph was plain to all who were there. The paragraph was written or caused to be written by a person of responsibility, and he needs, and I hope he will get, a salutary lesson, and that his prentices hand at criticising will be more careful in future.

And now to the game. We were beaten by a better team, but there is satisfaction in knowing that the promised revenge was cut to the minimum, thanks to the quality of the Town defence. The home team tried their hardest all through, and it was only the stubborn barrier offered that prevented them taking a more complete revenge. Nevertheless, it would have taken very little, I believe, to have reversed the result, and had the Town forward line remained as originally selected, I think we should have won. The absence of Hoar necessitated a reconstruction that upset the line, and without any reflection whatever upon Higginbotham and Irvine, we certainly missed the former's weight in front of goal, for there were occasions, both in the early stages and towards the end, when a vigorous assault would have won.

EXCITING MOMENTS.

For over twenty minutes the Town more than held their own. They worked with great speed and plenty of enterprise, and the home supporters suffered severe apprehension. Once Reid was sent through by Irvine in clever fashion, and he had the goal at his mercy, not more than three or four yards away, when he stumbled, and failed to kick the ball past Denoon. The next most exciting moment was just before the end, and two or three fouls were committed by the Swansea defenders in an endeavour to prevent a goal after Butcher and Reid had run the ball almost on to the goal line.

From the twentieth minute until a quarter of an hour from the end Swansea had the better of the game. They played hard and skilful football, and if the Town were "vigorous," as the Welsh papers suggest, some of the Swansea team were indisputably dirty. The "Swans" were without their captain, Houlson, and in his

stead the red-haired Collins appeared, and he had not been playing very long before he seemed to see "red," and on one occasion at least, the linesman — both the "flaggers" were South Wales officials — probably saved him marching orders, for he deliberately kicked Clarkson and Irvine, the latter very severely on the body. Clarkson's legs were badly bruised, and Irvine had more than his share.

ROUGH MUSIC.

On the other hand, when Jennings and Collins clashed, the Swansea crowd were very eager in their demands for the Town player to be sent off, and on one occasion an extraordinary thing happened. I have known organised cheering to rally a team, but never known organised booing. Someone in the grand stand invited those about him to give a Luton player rough music, and at least one journalist joined in the hullabaloo that followed.

Hole scored the only goal of the game after 20 minutes' play. Molyneux just failed to reach the ball properly in a gallant attempt to head clear, and HOLE got an easy chance close in and sent past Gibbon, and, as events proved, there was no further score.

Tom Gibbon was not to blame at all when this was registered. He kept goal cleverly, and with more confidence than on the previous Saturday. Little fault could be found with either Lennon or Tirrell, and the swift raids of the "Swans" invariably broke against the stern resistance. The kicking was strong, and perhaps long rather than useful, but the tackling was as relentless as ever. Jennings was again

IN MASTERLY FORM,

and the big man of the middle line. In defence and offence he was always at it, helping his forwards cleverly and staving off trouble from the backs. His one fault is that he wants to do it all, but it is testimony to his energy that Smith got in few shots, and not one of the "Swans" inside forwards got much time to take aim. Molyneux maintained his splendid form, and his anticipation of Thompson's moves, and co-operation with Jennings and Lennon were most effective. Roe played a grand game under painful conditions. Suffering from a severely damaged toe that ached with every step he took, he nevertheless stuck to Hole like a leech, and but for the handicap he endured the Swansea winger would probably never have eluded his pursuer. The forwards did not play so well as on the previous week, which was natural, considering the changes, and it is obvious that they were not so effective in front of goal. Reid was over-eager or he might well have scored on two or three occasions, for he was a constant worry to the backs, and he passed very nicely at times. Butcher was the active initiative unit, and his feeding was clever all through. Irvine was apt to be too deliberate, but of all the young forwards I think he is most likely to make a star, for he shows fine control, and a nice appreciation of a pass between the backs. Higginbotham was not as effective on the wing as inside, although he frequently beat the opposition with ease, but his marksmanship was not accurate. Clarkson did good work against an unscrupulous opponent, and middled nicely whenever he had a chance. Although lacking in combination the line did good work, and never shirked anything.

Swansea were best served by Milne, Harwood, Williams, Hole and Spottiswoode.

The gate was estimated to number 20,000, but if that proves to be the correct figure it will be a surprise to those who travelled from Luton, and 14,000 would be, I should think, a fairly generous estimate.

THE LEAGUE: DIVISION III.

	P	W	L	D	F	A	P
Bristol City	26	17	4	5	44	26	39
Swansea Town	26	15	6	5	53	29	35
Plymouth Argyle	24	14	7	3	32	14	31
Watford	26	12	7	7	37	29	31
Northampton Town	25	11	6	8	34	18	30
Millwall Athletic	26	8	5	13	24	21	29
Brighton & Hove A.	25	11	8	6	33	24	28
Portsmouth	26	12	10	4	36	32	28
Swindon Town	25	9	7	9	36	32	27
LUTON TOWN	26	10	10	6	39	35	26
Norwich City	24	9	7	8	29	27	25
Charlton Athletic	25	7	7	11	24	27	25
Exeter City	25	10	11	4	27	44	24
Queen's Park R.	26	7	11	8	31	28	22
Bristol Rovers	24	6	8	10	17	21	22
Southend United	24	7	10	7	33	34	21
Merthyr Town	24	6	9	9	22	29	21
Brentford	24	8	12	4	26	35	20
Reading	26	5	12	9	22	39	19
Gillingham	25	7	14	4	32	43	18
Newport County	26	4	14	8	21	44	16
Aberdare	24	5	15	4	25	46	16