

Luton Town Get One Point Out Of Four.

INJURED PLAYERS.

STORIES OF THE MATCHES AT SWANSEA AND LUTON.

By "CRUSADER."

LUTON TOWN have made an unfortunate opening of the season.

At Swansea the result was the same as last season—defeat by the only goal scored. At Luton last night they only made a draw with Northampton, thus dropping a point in comparison with last season. The club is unfortunate in that Till, Tirrell, and Graham, three of the five backs, have all met with injuries, and Danskin sustained a strain of the thigh early in the game last night.

AT SWANSEA.

SWANSEA TOWN 1 goal
LUTON TOWN Nil

SWANSEA. — Brooke; Morley, Milne; Bellamy, Collins, Booth; Hole, Deacon, Smith, Thompson, Spottiswoode.

LUTON. — Gibbon; Graham, Tirrell; Foster, Jennings, Millar; Hoar, Green, Kerr, Hoten, Danskin.

Referee: Mr. E. Pinckston, Birmingham.

Disappointed when you opened your "Saturday Telegraph" and read that the Town had lost at Swansea, after a few moments for reflection you said to yourselves, "Well, it's not so bad." That is what I thought you were doing when we were making ready for the home journey, and I fancy it is nearly correct. Had you been at Swansea, however, you would have said that Luton were unlucky to lose. We deserved a point, for while Swansea had the better of the first half by reason of skilful play, Luton were a much better side in the second. Moreover, Swansea had all the luck there was going. If a ball rebounded or ricocheted it invariably fell at the toe of a Swansea player, and there will never be three narrower escapes of goals against Brooks during this season than was the case on Saturday. More of these shortly, however.

First let me pay

A TRIBUTE

to the very fine forward line of Swansea. Last season this line scored more goals than any other League club. On Saturday's form they will be somewhere near a repetition of the feat this season. While it is true that the ball seemed to go to them as if it were an inspired thing, very often they got it and kept it by sheer merit. The forwards had an understanding that could not have been improved had they been brought up in the same football nursery, and their combination was dazzling at times. That also indicates no little merit on the part of the Luton defence. It was a hard, keen tussle from start to finish, with a minimum of foul play, and the players seemed to have a real sporting relationship. The ground was fast, the ball lively, the air was keen, the spectators enthusiastic—chiefly over Swansea's work, of course, but not ungenerous to Luton. The only element to detract from the general enjoyment was the adoption of the one-back game by Swansea—a feature attended with disastrous results when they visited Luton last season. This year, however, the Luton forwards did not seem able to encompass

THE WILY SCHEMING

of Morley and Milne—the latter's in particular. Green especially suffered through Milne's cunning, and the referee's whistle cut short the tenseness of situations time and again, and the spectators found their breath again in an outburst of laughter. When Tirrell copied the plan with success there was a cry of "Play the game!" which showed that some of the Welshmen like their sauce served up in one tureen only. I must confess that in these irritating moments I longed for George Butcher—one quick enough to grasp the essential strategy to thwart tactics that are bewildering, yet perfectly justifiable. But for the number of free kicks that Swansea were awarded near the halfway line as a result of this practice there would have been much less work for Gibbon and his backs, and the balance of play would have been at the Swansea goalkeeper's end.

Nevertheless, with all their skill, Swansea were fortunate to open a credit account, for it was a goal that had

LITTLE MERIT

in itself, and it was quite unexpected. The game had been in progress exactly twenty-eight minutes when Thompson began a dribble for goal. He was well clear until overtaken by Foster, who got in front of him and charged him heavily, but, in my opinion, quite fairly. There was no trip, and the Town players claimed

that although Thompson fell within the area, the clash occurred on the other side of the line. We could not see the lines from the stand, but the referee refused to give way, and matters were not made any better by Thompson being helped off the field. Smith took the kick, but his shot, while powerful, was well within reach of Gibbon, who stopped it and cleared with ease. Thompson returned immediately. The Town had a burst to the other end. Back came Swansea, Smith and Deacon in the van. The ball was sent well forward. One of the defenders missed it, but several players were

WITHIN ARM'S LENGTH

of each other when Gibbon got the ball low down. Unfortunately, Graham, in the act of falling, knocked the keeper's arm, and the ball fell with Gibbon, Graham and Smith all on the ground, and DEACON promptly tapped it into the net.

Almost on the stroke of the interval Hoar beat all opposition and tapped the ball to Kerr. The Scot shot, and a goal seemed certain when Milne flung himself across and deflected it for a corner, and half-time came with Swansea leading by a goal.

They deserved it as far as a team may deserve a lead on the balance of play, for they had been better than Luton for reasons already stated. In the second half they were the equal of Luton, but there was such an improvement in the character of the latter's display that they must have drawn level had they been as fortunate in moments of crises as were the "Swans." The "offside practice" still harassed and nullified their efforts, but the home goal had narrower escapes than before, and play was opened out more. Once the whole forward line was beyond the backs when play was stopped because a "Swan" was down, a matter on which some referees would have exercised discretion differently. Near the end, when Luton were showing

THE BETTER STAMINA

and making determined efforts, they were prevented equalising by sheer ill-luck. Once there was an assault in which, after several shots had been beaten off, Hoten put in a shot that seemed certain to do the trick, for Brooks was at the other end of the goal, but the ball glanced off a defender's leg and went for a corner. Even more harrowing was an occasion just before the finish. Hoten burst between the backs and went for goal. Just as everybody felt sure that the scores would be levelled Brooks managed to knock the ball off Hoten's toe, and the goal was saved in a manner that evoked applause quite as hearty as when Swansea scored.

The end found us a goal down. The weakness of our side was not in defence; it was forward. By comparison, Swansea's attack was much better, but I don't want to stress that fact, because the main deficiency of our men was in meeting the offside strategy. And, not only did Morley and Milne beat our forwards with it, they several times

BEAT THE REFEREE.

too, for he was at fault on two or three occasions in giving the Luton players offside, so smartly was the ruse practised. But for this I think we should have brought the points away, and it is up to the forwards to see that the same victimisation does not operate again. Gibbon was all right, and made half a dozen brilliant saves. He could not be blamed for the goal. Graham did not open at all well. His kicking was untrue and he hesitated in his tackling, but after the change of ends he, as others, was keyed up, and he played a fine game, even taking part in the inauguration of attacks, and he came out of the ordeal with brighter colours than we thought possible at one time. Tirrell was a grand defender. He had not the understanding with Millar that he has with Rze, and this was a matter for anxiety, but he was true in his kicking, and as faithful in his anticipation as ever he has been, and

he, certainly, is in no danger of being displaced. I wish those who behaved in such ridiculous fashion at the practice games could have seen Jennings. He was

THE POWERFUL AGENT

at half, and while the crowd occasionally jeered him they often were compelled to applaud. He wrecked many attacks, and his play not once brought him under penalty. Indeed, it is many a day since I saw a game when half-backs were as fair all round. He performed valiantly throughout. Foster's great trouble was the lively ball, for its pace and automatic spin on a ground that falls away from the "crown" of the field often beat him, but he put up a hard, robust game against a clever wing, and in the second half showed considerable improvement. So did Millar, for although he opened none too surely, when he had found his feet he was all of a match for Hole, clever as the Welsh International is. Naturally he has not the skill of Roe, but his work was wholesome and always useful, and with a little more experience and more accuracy in feeding he will be all right.

THE FAILING

forward I have referred to. Their best also came in the second half, but there will have to be better combination and shooting if they are to get goals. Hour and Hoten were the most dangerous at all times, but the former did not get enough of the ball. His speed and centring were good as ever, and Hoten's thrusts were a source of danger. Danskin should have had more work, too, for he got in some good centres when he had a chance, and he did not waste opportunities. Kerr was unfortunate, for not only did Collins stick to him very closely, but he was out of luck with his shots, and he needs to be spoon-fed if we are to get the full fruits of his speed and enterprise near goal. Green was even less fortunate, for he found the offside rule thwarting almost every movement in the first half—except once when he nearly scored. In the second half he did better, too.

In the front line was the key to the cause of defeat, but not because of lack of individual merit so much as the need for craft that would have been cunning.

The crowd numbered about 16,000, and the weather, although dull, was fine.