

SWINDON SURPRISED.

LUCKY WIN OVER LUTON TOWN

Fraser's Fine Debut.

By Crusader.

SWINDON TOWN 2 goals
LUTON TOWN Nil
Swindon. — Bourne, Dickinson, Weston, Purness, Bow, Johnson, S. J. Denyer, Dickinson, Morris, Perrie, Thom. Luton. — Harper, Graham, Till, Black, Rennie, Fraser, Linton, Panther, Reid, Agnew, Clark.

Referee: A. E. Gray, Forest Gate.
It must be weeks since a Luton Town team travelled with so much confidence on what seemed a homeless quest, but, even with the result as above, there was justification for that confidence. At least one point should have been wrested from the League leaders, and with even a crust of luck, let alone a slice, both points would have come to Luton. Taking the game as a whole Luton were worth a division of the spoils, and as proof I give two opinions.

After the match there was some doubt as to whether Morris had scored, and I went into the Swindon dressing-room to verify. It was correct that he had, but there was a chorus of admissions that he had been very lucky indeed to do so.

REFEREE'S VIEW.

Secondly, the referee. At Luton I usually verify his identity, but at Swindon I did not trouble, as several newspapermen said they had confirmed the names on the programme and all were correct. The game did not require much prominence from the referee, and having seen Mr. Richards, of Bristol, only once, and that at Luton at the beginning of the season, I did not distinguish the difference between him and Mr. Gray, of Forest Gate, who should have taken the London Combination match at Luton. I never considered the latter for a moment, but when we were travelling from Paddington to King's Cross he was in the same carriage, and then we discovered that he had been the official. He was telling another referee how lucky Swindon had been to get the points, and that Luton should have won the game in the first half.

The correction of the referee's name in the "Saturday-Telegraph" was made on information given by Mr. Green at Luton.

DEFECTIVE MARKSMANSHIP.

Some of the reports are a gross travesty of the run of the game. Luton had sixty per cent. of the play in the first half, and there was nothing like that difference between the teams in the second, when Swindon had a slight advantage. The second goal scored by the home side was the one bad error the referee made, and it should never have been allowed. On the other hand the Town missed a tremendous number of chances, the marksmanship of the inside men being the chief defect.

We were all surprised to find the ground in such good condition, though before the second half was well gone the traffic had made it a frightful mess. Once Bob Graham and Morris went down together and slid five or six yards together, and were almost too sticky to get up.

BETTER COMBINATION.

For more than half of the first period the Luton backs were usually operating on the half-way line, and the home backs and halves were fighting stubbornly and vigorously to resist the onslaughts of the back work, the Luton vanguard proved more than a match for the opposition in midfield work, and their constructive efforts put the home team entirely in the shade. It is true that Dickinson was hurt and had to change places with one of the halves, but that made little difference, for before then, as after, the Luton attack was fast and agile, and if the shooting had been anything like it appears to have been in the London Combination match at home there would have been extraordinary surprise for the little crowd at Luton when the half-time scores went up.

A STRIDE TOO MANY.

In the opening stages Fraser seemed a trifle nervy, but within five minutes was as cool as any player on the field, and was going just as confidently and as strongly as if in a Reserve game. It was through his fine work that the Luton left wing became prominent early on by repeated dashes. Both wingers dropped the ball over nicely, but the inside forwards were all guilty of taking a stride too many before shooting, although in this connection Panther did not err so much, because he was most unselfishly trying to make chances for others. Agnew was the biggest sinner, and several times had a chance of hitting the ball hard at goal, but wanted to take another yard shorter range, and the result was that his shots, strong enough when they came, were blocked by defenders.

MORE ATTRACTIVE METHOD.

The inside-left worked with great zeal, however, and I do not think I am far wrong in saying that the understanding between Clark, Agnew, and Fraser was as good as any left wing combination we have seen this season. Time after time Clark made ground and then slipped the ball inside to his colleague, and if the latter had taken his courage in both hands and belted the ball at goal first time I think he would have met with more than one success in the first quarter of an hour. There was much more attractive method in the Luton tactics than in those of the home side, for the ball frequently made contact with all the Luton halves and forwards in its progress up the field, whereas

the home side were playing almost all the time for Morris to make a single-handed dash. He lay well down the field, and time after time Graham or Till encountered him on a solo effort and dispossessed him. When he was pulled up on offside several times the crowd kicked up a noise, as they also did when on two occasions he burst through.

BEST SHOT OF THE GAME.

Once he got ahead of Graham and looked all over a scorer, but Harper ran to meet him and there was not room for the ball to pass Harper and find the net, and it

missing the custodian, Morris sent it a yard wide. On another occasion he managed to bore through in time to get his head to a dropping ball, but Harper positioned perfectly, caught the ball in his arms as he dropped, and then managed to throw clear. Denyer once missed a fine chance, too, but there were more opportunities at the other end. The best shot of the game, probably, came from Pointon, who drove in with all his powder behind the ball, and Bourne brought off a spectacular save, one hand shooting out to lift the ball high over. The Town had many corner-kicks, too, and once Clark was about to take one when a spectator leaned over and pulled him back, putting him off his run. There were several scrimmages in the home goal, while Reid narrowly missed with a terrific shot taken on the run, and Rennie sent hot drives slithering a few inches wide.

When the interval came Luton had put up the better game, enjoyed much more of the play, and looked good value for victory if they could keep up the pressure in the second half.

SWINDON TOWN 0

LUTON TOWN 0

When the teams reappeared it was evident that the "Railwaymen" were bent on

pushing the Luton men off their feet, and a strong bid for success was immediately successful. The Luton team seemed almost surprised by the vigour of the onslaught, and for two or three minutes were baffled and luffed by the fierceness of the assault. Graham had to concede a corner, and from this there was a hot scrimmage in the Luton goal-area, but the ball was sent out many times. Eventually it was returned to Denyer, and he centred, the ball skimming the top of the mud as it came across for MORRIS to shoot into the net from close quarters. There were similar threats during the next five minutes, and then Luton got going again, and to some tune. The home defenders were in desperate plight, but were very unceremonious, and used their weight freely.

AN OFFSIDE GOAL.

Clark was persistent, and crossed the ball dangerously three or four times, and Weston all but sent the ball past his own goalkeeper in trying to put back. Then Pointon had a gilt-edged opportunity from close range, and should have scored easily, but missed badly. Two or three minutes later there was a series of fierce scenes in the home goal-mouth, and how the Luton forwards failed to get the ball

through was inexplicable. It was questionable whether Weston did not foul Reid when the latter was going through and within ten yards of goal, and then there was another hot tussle almost under the bar. It seemed as if the equaliser must come, but play veered to the wings again. Swindon did not look much like scoring, for they were well held, Morris being compelled to shoot from impossible positions or to lose the ball. When Swindon did count again Mr. Gray made a bad blunder. Morris ran directly into an offside position, and then called for a pass. It came, and the Town backs and halves and Harper all appealed and pointed to the crack shot's isolation, some two or three yards nearer the Luton goal than anyone except Harper. Indeed, play almost stopped, but the referee made no sign, and Morris, who was several yards to the right of goal, was allowed to send it over to THOM, who had a simple task.

THE EMPTY BOTTLE.

This seemed to decide the issue, for the Town could not get going well again, and when the home forwards swept down the Luton backs were usually too strong, though Harper had many times to handle and clear. In the course of a troublesome move by the home left wing, Graham cleverly thwarted Thom, but the latter tripped the back and then recovered the ball. Graham tripped the forward, and then one of the most one-sided linesmen I have seen for a long time, whose best part was his three-and-sixpenny badge, flagged for a foul. He must have seen the first offence, which was just as bad, but had no eye for home team offences. A little later a bottle was thrown at Graham, but, as he humorously remarked, it was empty.

Play petered out, there being little further incident of note except the rushes of Morris and the very fine manner in which Graham or Till held him.

THE WINNERS.

It was a good game, with little in to cavi about so far as behaviour was concerned, except that the home halves were not disposed to hesitate in bringing down the Town forwards. The defence was robust rather than clever, and not comparable with Luton's for cleanness of kicking or tackling. Bourne had not enough work considering the amount of pressure Luton applied, but made saves that stamped him a fine goalkeeper. Weston played well, and Bew was a strong pivot. The forwards played nice, open football, with Morris most in the picture, his strength and pertinacity always making for danger. As a side their football was not so good as that of Luton, and their success was largely adventitious. Several of the team showed fine control, and the wingers were fast and centred well.

THE LOSERS.

Harper could not be blamed for either goal, seemed much more confident than usual, and fielding and delivery were sure. The backs played a great game, and apart from one occasion in the first half when Till dribbled and lost the ball, there could be little fault found with them. Graham had a heavy burden thrust upon him, however, because of Black's disposition to leave the opposing flank with too wide an operating theatre. Time after time Thom had yards of space in which to beat Graham, and a lot of time to do it. This is Black's main fault, and another was a tendency to dribble rather deliberately. His skill with the ball is unquestionable, and he did many bright things, initiating a lot of attacks, and helping his wing to good effect. If Rennie never played any worse than in this game he would get little criticism but praise. He appeared stronger than usual, thoughtful in distribution, and some of his tackling work was very fine indeed.

THE DEBUTANT.

Fraser's display demands a paragraph to itself. If he were a trifle faster he would have no peer among Luton's middle men to-day, I am sure. None who did not know him would have dreamed that he was a debutant, and I do not remember a player at his first showing winning such praise as fell to him. He deserved it, for he was resolute in defence, took hard knocks readily, played the ball all the time, and with head and feet showed a skill far beyond his years. His co-operation with Clark and Agnew continually won approval, and admiration of his craftsmanship was freely expressed in the official circles. With every appreciation of Millar's consistency I can say that he was not missed.

WEAKNESS INSIDE.

Of the forwards it is rather difficult to deal individually. As a line their approach work was fast and often cleverer, and generally in advance of Swindon's. Clark and Pointon got the ball over splendidly as a rule, though the latter was not so speedy as usual, perhaps because he got a rap the first time he touched the ball. Clark has seldom been seen to such advantage on the Luton side, and he and Agnew had excellent understanding. Most of the danger came from this wing. Agnew's work was whole-hearted as usual, and prompt shooting alone was required to make him a very dangerous forward. Panther is not an inside winger. He was always trying to help somebody else, and as persistent as ever, but I believe he would have done better service had he been allowed to go to the leadership at the beginning and Reid taken the inside-right position. The latter was lacking opportunities, the simple reason being that he did not position well enough to get the better of Bew. He put in several fine shots, but was not on his toes form.

There were 7,567 spectators, and the receipts were sixpence under £437.

The match between Hitchin Blue Cross and Ste enage in the County Senior Cup Competition, on Saturday, was postponed for a week, as the Stevenage ground was not fit to play upon.