

FIRST FALL AT HOME

Swindon's Surprising Success At Luton

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN suffered their first home defeat at the hands of SWINDON TOWN on Saturday. The result was altogether against the general run of play, but the visitors fought so magnificently all through the game that they hardly deserved to go away without some share of the spoils. Whatever they lacked in the matter of skill by comparison with the Luton team individually, they compensated by their whole-heartedness, their fine spirit, and their opportunism.

* * *

IT was probably the last-named quality more than aught else that enabled them to succeed after all had seemed to be lost. They were two goals down with the second half more than half spent, but they made a wonderful recovery, and by scoring three goals within a period of twelve minutes, they snatched a victory. It was a triumph for pluck and enterprise against style and cleverness without determination.

* * *

TAIT scored the only goal of the first half, a header at close quarters beating Briggs when the game had been in progress just over the half-hour. It was a well-earned goal, and many chances of a less hazardous nature had been missed previously. Mackey booted the ball right into the Swindon goalmouth, and Tait went for it among a group of defenders and managed to get his head to it before the goalkeeper could punch clear. All the forwards went very close with efforts of one sort or another, but the Swindon defenders protected their charge with great energy and determination.

* * *

AT the other end, although Swindon's attacks were spasmodic, Harford made three or four brilliant saves when he seemed certain to be beaten. To him, quite as much as to the forwards, the Town owed their first-half lead. Once Armstrong struck the upright, while several shots went close, and one brilliant save was made by the Town goalkeeper when he dived full length and turned aside a hard shot that came all along the ground, aimed at the farther corner of the goal. Still, the balance of attack was with the Town by a great deal, and with better finishing they would have been in an enviable position at the change over.

* * *

THE second half was not so rosy, but ANDERSON scored his first goal as a professional when he headed through from Tait's pass at the end of an hour's play. None had better deserved the honour than the little winger, for he had played splendidly. When this goal came the spectators could breathe a little more freely, for it did not seem probable that the visitors would overcome the disadvantage. However, the fiercer the struggle the better they seemed to like it, and they rose to the occasion in great style.

* * *

MAINLY by the strong kicking of their backs and halves they made things warm for the Town rearguard, and the one player who required more careful watching than any other—Armstrong—was allowed too much rope. Through his thoughtfulness the first goal to Swindon accrued. He drew the defenders and then passed to the unmarked PETERS, who flashed in a high shot that gave Harford no chance of saving, and it was clear then that the visitors were a hundred per cent. better side.

* * *

WHILE the Town exerted the more pressure the visitors brought more punch into their raids, and when Gibson failed to take quickly enough a loose ball some distance from the goal, Armstrong pounced upon it, and got in a hard drive from close range; Harford parried the shot, but could not get the ball clear, and ARMSTRONG fastened on it once more and then kicked it into the net, to bring the scores level. This was good going for the visitors, and they went all out to win, and succeeded.

* * *

THEIR third goal came about as the result of a clearance following hot pressure on their goal. The ball was taken rapidly to the other end, and Harford only managed to save his charge by a frantic dive at the feet of Armstrong as the latter shot. The ball went behind, and when Peters took the corner kick, FISHER was standing unmarked just on the fringe of the crowd of players. As the ball came to him he shot first time, and the ball travelled all along the ground and just inside the post as Harford dived for it.

* * *

IT was a big blow to the spectators to see the points snatched from the Town when victory was within grasp, as, of course, it also was to the team. Harford was blameless, but there was not such good protection for his goal from his colleagues as there was for the custodian at the other end. Kingham played well, and Gibson kicked well, and had the stamp of class in his work, though prone to take matters rather too easily against an opposition that never wasted time in getting to grips.

* * *

FRASER was the best player on the field, and Kean did good work until he had taken too much out of himself in the second half. Mackey was not an unqualified success as pivot, for he allowed Armstrong far too much rope, but the whole of the middle line concentrated on attack, and the forwards should have fulfilled their mission better. Here the fault was poor finishing, as usual, and Anderson was the only player to enhance his reputation materially.

* * *

FOR SWINDON, Briggs was a good goalkeeper, and Bernard Harris, the old Town back, played a very fine game, his work all round being very clean and effective. Nixon did very well at centre-half, though introduced as a stop-gap, and all the forwards had pace and courage. Armstrong was particularly lively in his leadership, and Peters was a speedy and efficient winger, and only the watchfulness of Fraser kept him in subjection.

There were 7,756 spectators, and the receipts were about £498.

* * *

SWINDON TOWN 3

LUTON TOWN 2

Scorers for Swindon: PETERS, ARMSTRONG, FISHER.

Scorers for Luton: TAIT, ANDERSON.

LUTON.—Harford: Kingham, Gibson; Kean, Mackey, Fraser; Pease, Martin, Tait, Rennie, Anderson.

SWINDON.—Briggs: Harris, Herod; Cousins, Nixon, Merrick; Peters, Fisher, Armstrong, Blakemore, Flanagan.

Referee.—Mr. R. G. Rudd, Kenton.