

THERE WAS A WINNER

GREAT RECOVERY IN SECOND HALF

Fraser Best of the Lot

(By "CRUSADER")

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.

WE have become so accustomed to taking both points from SWINDON TOWN that the match at LUTON on Saturday was regarded as something of a walk-over. Swindon disillusioned the Luton followers and team too, if the latter shared the confidence. That the Hatters were the more stylish was evident all through, but the visitors had one quality that means so much— they were as determined and courageous as any side that has visited Luton for years: they had the virtue of striving for all they were worth even when the odds were heavily against them, and that pulled them out of an apparently hopeless position and eventually gained for them the victory. I doubt if half-a-dozen of the Town supporters grudged the visitors' success, bitterly disappointed though they were. For some reason there seemed to be lacking from the Town that team spirit and fighting quality that characterised the whole of the Swindon side. Even when the visitors were having to fight their hardest to foil the numerous attacks that were carried out by the Luton forwards with skilful footwork and understanding, the home team did not seem well together, and before the end they had drifted to a very mediocre lot.

LASTED BETTER

In the first half, and for the greater part of the second, the Luton forwards were showing the visitors a lot of things they could not emulate, but all the time every player in opposition was doing his utmost, and, what is more, there was far more pace and stamina in the visitors' rushes than there was in the Town efforts. I do not pretend to know the reason for it, but certainly the Swindon side seemed to last better in spite of the gruelling they had sustained in the first forty-five minutes. Possibly Swindon would not have had one point but for the defensive blunder that gave them the second goal, but one could see some such mistake coming a long time before then. In many ways there was too much that was casual about the resistance of the Luton halves and backs: their challenges were not made with that determination and incisiveness that marked the work of the Swindon halves and backs, and there was not equal resourcefulness in covering up or in recovery.

DISMALLOWED

By the manner in which Luton went into their job it appeared as though the result was only a question of counting up the goals, and the Swindon backs and goalkeeper had plenty to do in the first twenty minutes. The understanding between the home halves and forwards evoked much praise, and kept the crowd in a fever of expectancy. On the left, Fraser, especially, was brilliant, and his wing gave the more trouble, though Martin was always in the picture with clever initiatory work, and Pease muddled well. I thought that the Town's best goal came when Rennie fired into the net a first-time shot, following a

mix-up in the Swindon goalmouth, but could only suppose that the goal was disallowed for someone impeding the goalkeeper, for it hardly seemed possible that a player was offside, so thick was the crowd of players under the Swindon bar. When the visitors got away they showed more opportunism, and their forwards had many more shots than the home team put in, but that was probably because the positioning of the home defenders was not so good as that of the visitors. Harford was nearly beaten two or three times, and made splendid saves. Briggs had plenty to do, too, but had also more time in which to do it.

A LOT OF LATITUDE

When Luton opened the score the game had been in progress just over the half-hour, and the move came quite unexpectedly. Rennie had to head back quickly to Mackey in order to frustrate Cousins, and the Town centre-half banged the ball well up into the Swindon goalmouth; TAIT dashed up and managed to get his head to the ball before the other, and it went into the net. A minute or two later Anderson might have had another, for he was given a great chance through the crickery of Martin, but the little winger shot wide. Armstrong was a constant menace to the Town goal, but he was getting a lot of latitude, and frequently found a clear course, too much work being left to the Luton backs, though that view could not have occurred, perhaps, if the forwards had been able to finish off their work well, since the halves were following right up to them and giving splendid support. It was just about as much as the Town deserved when the interval came with the score

LUTON TOWN	1
SWINDON	Nil

There was not so much good football in the second half. The home team were quickly on the aggressive, the left wing being prominent, and Anderson was cheered for his bright work. For a long time the visitors' goal was in jeopardy, though now and again there was a quick salis to the other end and Harford had to be his best to stave off disaster. It was a sudden breakaway after a hot spell by the visitors that brought the second goal. Rennie shot the ball up the field for Tait to take possession, well to the right, beat Herod and then centred right across goal, and ANDERSON headed in neatly, the ball beating Briggs as he dived to save. Fast and even play, chiefly of a kick-and-rush character, followed. Both Harford and Briggs had their work cut out to keep their respective charges intact, and Harford gained commendation for his alertness and skill. With virtually half-an-hour of the second half gone the result seemed in safe keeping, but Swindon had other ideas. They were playing harder than ever, and the home forwards, although still having more of the ball, were without driving force.

THE TURNOVER

Blakemore, who had been working staunchly all through, started a move that brought Swindon's first goal. He gave to Armstrong, who drew the defenders and then tapped the ball to the right. His kicks had closed in, and in running forward he took careful aim, and then shot hard and true into the net, right away from the reach of Harford. This was a real tonic to the visitors, and they threw themselves into the struggle with renewed ardour. Luton played well enough up to a point, but their efforts fizzled out at close quarters. Not so those of Swindon. Armstrong was given a splendid chance to equalise, but shot badly. He made amends within a few seconds, for, getting the ball after Gibson had mis-kicked, he shot hard and Harford saved grandly, but failed to hold the ball, and before he could recover, ARMSTRONG was on it and the scores were level. For a few minutes it seemed as if Luton would re-assert their superiority, but the visitors would have none of it, and they came again, Harford dashing out to dive at the feet of Armstrong and save magnificently at the expense of a corner. From the flag-kick FISHER, unmarked, took a first time shot on the turn, and the ball squeezed among legs and just inside the post as Harford made a fruitless dive. Luton never looked like equalising, although they did the more pressing, but the visitors, by swinging the ball about a lot, came very near to increasing their lead. Armstrong missing an easy chance to close in.

PLAYERS

Harford was free from blame. If there was a goal against which he had half a chance it was the last, but I think he would have beaten almost any goalkeeper, coming as quickly and as unexpectedly as it did. He made half-a-dozen saves when few would have blamed him had he been beaten. Kingham played as well as ever at right back, though now and then I thought he was inclined to allow Flanagan, the Swindon recruit, to take liberties that he would not have permitted to a more experienced player. Gibson made the one bad b'under that brought the second goal to the visitors. His kicking was clean and well-timed, but in tackling he seemed to wait a trifle too long, and that is not wise in this class of football. Fraser was easily the best half-back, and, indeed, the best player on the field. In defence and attack he was magnificent. Mackey was not so successful as in the previous game. He left the defence to take care of itself in the second half, and Armstrong usually had a lot more field than was allowed to Tait at the other end. In attack the centre-half was not so useful as was required more as a barrier against a strong and dashing leader. Kean was a prime mover in the attacks of the first half especially, but was tiring in the second.

POOR FINISHING

The faults in defence, however, were emphasised by the weakness forward. With such support as the halves were giving, more goals should have come, and would have come had there been anything like the shooting that should have accompanied so much pressure in the first half. There was plenty of skill in approach, the combination again reaching a high standard in the first hour, but the finishing was as poor as ever. Taking the game throughout, Luton's forwards did quite two-thirds of the attacking, but the visitors did two-thirds of the shooting, and the forwards played with the same grim determination as the men behind them. There was not much to choose among the line, though Martin played very skilful football and made many openings, but none was better than the youngest unit of the line, Anderson. He played finely, and has both courage and skill, and is making good very rapidly. Tait's goal was his hundredth in League games.

SWINDON

Briggs was a good goalkeeper for the visitors, and Harris played as soundly for them as ever he played for Luton. He was the better back. Herod being somewhat wild in his kicking. The pair of them positioned well, and showed good judgment in tackling, while they had in front of them a hard-working intermediate line who helped a great deal during the stormy periods. Considering that he was in a new position, and a player simply on trial, Nixon did

very well at centre-half, and the flankers also worked very hard. The forwards did not receive such skilful assistance as did the Town attackers, but they were quick on the ball, swung it about, and went straight for goal. Armstrong was a terrier-sort of leader, and his inside men foraged for him and for their partners to good purpose.

There were 7,766 spectators, and the receipts were £457 13s. 6d which could be considered very good indeed in view of the bad weather a few hours before the match. Winner of the ball was Mr. Albert Warner, 15, Dane-road, Luton, with ticket No. 1925.