

Swindin promises fighting Arsenal a new signing

By JOHN CAMKIN

THIS hard-earned victory ended a sequence of five consecutive defeats, but Arsenal's manager, George Swindin, still hopes to sign a new wing half-back before Saturday's encounter with Wolves at Highbury.

"We need an old hand to help us out this season," said Swindin. "I was trying on Sunday morning to get someone for this game. Although Tommy Docherty and Mel Charles are nearly fit, the need is still there."

Arsenal, of course, had the strongest wing half-back formation of any First Division club at the start of the season, when the £45,000 Charles, Scotland's Docherty, Welsh captain David Bowen, Gerry Ward and skipper Vic Groves were all available.

But yesterday Swindin was forced to gamble with full-back Len Wills and inside-forward John Barnwell in those vital wing-half positions. Thanks to their determination and stamina on a treacle-like pitch, it was a gamble that earned handsome rewards.

At least the game—strong, exciting stuff—showed that the slide down the championship has not affected Arsenal's fighting heart.

Scrambled goal

There were times when the defence held out against overwhelming odds.

In all Luton mustered 27 shots and a dozen corners without collecting a goal. Arsenal's score, prodded home by Len Julians in a scramble on the stroke of half-time, was backed only by a few other shots and four corners.

But Dodgin, Dennis Evans and goalkeeper Jim Standen each provided resolute support to their emergency wing half-backs.

Dodgin, kicking one second-half shot from Billy Bingham from the line, and Standen, each saved certain goals.

Standen, in fact, amazed 25,000 spectators in the 55th minute when he changed direction in midair to parry a powerful short-range header from Allan Brown.

INDEED, THE FUTURE MAY PROVE THAT THIS WAS THE MOMENT WHEN ARSENAL BEGAN THE CLIMB TO SAFETY.

Short and square

One must feel sorry for Luton, whose own wing half-backs David Pacey and John Groves were the game's outstanding figures, but their forwards contributed to their own downfall by making too many short and square passes.

A testimony to the folly of these tactics is the fact that only rarely were Arsenal's inexperienced wing half-backs drawn out of position.

Swindin is certainly wise to recognise that Wolves will not play a similar game on Saturday.

LUTON: Baynham 8; Dunne 7; Daniel 7; Groves 8; Kelly 7; Pacey 8; Bingham 8; Turner 7; Brown 7; Morton 6; Gregory 7.
ARSENAL: Standen 9; Magill 7; Evans 8; Wills 8; Dodgin 8; Barnwell 8; Nutt 5; Herd 7; Julians 6; Bloomfield 7; Haverty 7.
REFEREE: D. H. Howell (Birmingham).
LINESMEN: C. H. Pegg (Cambridge), R. O. Lyon (Huntingdon).

Luton 0 Arsenal 1
RATINGS—Skill: Luton 7,
Arsenal 7. Sportsmanship 7.
Crowd 8. Control 7.