

Sheffield, Lewis

Luton Town 2

Swindon Town 0

68/69
ROGER DUCKWORTH REPORTS

LUTON kept their 100 per cent home record with a 2-0 win over highly-placed Swindon in a tough match this afternoon.

There was almost a gala atmosphere for Swindon's visit.

At the start a hazy sun was trying to penetrate the mist which persisted all morning. And there was still overnight frost lying on the pitch at the Kenilworth Road end.

Luton were full of confidence with the return of skipper Terry Branston and wingers Graham French and Mike Harrison.

Manager Allan Brown switched strikers Laurie Sheffield and Brian Lewis in an effort to reproduce the earlier goal-scoring form.

A larger than usual crowd congregated before the start, and the Oak Road Choir was in good form with some entertaining songs.

Unchanged

For Luton left half Jack Bannister was playing his second home match and was included in the back four with Dougan, McDerment and Branston. Goerge Potter was substitute.

Swindon were unchanged from the team that beat Derby, Second Division promotion hopes, in the quarter final of the League Cup earlier in the week.

The selection of today's team meant the exclusion of regular Keith Allen. As manager Allan Brown walked along the touchline at the start one fan yelled angrily at him: "What's wrong with Keith Allen?"

Swindon began in a lively mood. A clearance by Dougan struck the back of Noble's head, but Branston came to the rescue with a hefty clearance.

After a good run down the touchline French did well to head a Branston clearance back across the middle, finding Rioch, who burst past his man and shot inches wide.

Fierce shot

From the goal kick Luton came back, and a foul on Slough by Harland resulted in Rioch's shot from the short free-kick just going over the top.

The best move of the opening minutes, which belonged to Luton, came from a Harrison move on the left and ended in a fierce shot on the turn from Lewis being well caught by Downsborough.

Luton's attack was moving well with both wingers showing a liking for beating his man and getting the ball across at the best time.

In the middle Rioch showed fire and determination in early runs when he displayed his ability to outstrip the opposition to get in a shot.

At this stage Swindon had little to show up front. Once, when right-winger Heath broke away, Bannister coolly fell back to rob him and found Lewis with a good pass.

Lewis raced for and shot a corner just as the Luton striker was about to

pass well out on the wing but shot wide from 40 yards.

Davie was forced into his first real save in the 23rd minute when Butler broke through following good work by Smith and tried a low shot which the Luton goalkeeper had to dive to his right to save.

Swindon's strength lay in their midfield solidarity, and as the first half wore on Luton were finding it increasingly difficult to get through.

A bad tackle by Harland forced Lewis into a moment of indiscretion when he chased after the big left half and looked as if he was about to strangle him, flinging his arms round the Swindon man's neck and stopping just in time to avoid a "booking" from the referee, who gave him a stern telling off.

Effective

In the 26th minute the referee threatened to stop the match if a fan behind the Oak Road goal persisted in blowing a whistle. A loud-speaker announcement was made to the effect after the referee spoke to Luton officials.

In the first half hour Luton's defence was proving to be just as effective as Swindon's.

Dougan and McDerment were moving well and distributing with skill and determination. Bannister, playing alongside Branston, was tackling well.

On the half hour Luton were given a fright when Branston mistimed his tackle and let in Noble with a sight of the goal from close in. Luckily for Luton he was hurried into his shot and his effort went wide.

Bannister made ground through the middle, but his intelligent run was spoiled by a wayward pass that was meant for Harrison.

A bad pass from McDerment down the wing spoiled another promising Luton move, and as Swindon came back Lewis was spoken to again for a trip on Harland, who didn't like the treatment.

Swindon built up another attack from the right but Branston put an end to all Heath's hopes with a hefty clearance. Lewis raced away but was neatly robbed by Smart.

Town might have expected better results from a French cross on the right but Sheffield was baulked. Slough picked up the rebound and hammered a terrific shot at goal which Downsborough did well to turn round for a corner.

Searing drive

This was turning into a tough battle between two good sides. Both teams had obviously done their homework and seemed to have the measure of the other.

Luton linkmen Slough and Rioch were always ready to shoot, and five minutes before the interval Harland was knocked clean of his feet when a searing drive from Rioch hit him in the face.

Not to be outdone French cut in from the wing to try a low shot which was not very far wide.

The first real flash of brilliance from Rogers came just before half-time when he wandered over to the right, worked a passing movement

spur Luton to victory

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Dougan, McDerment; Slough, Branston, Bannister; French, Sheffield, Lewis, Rioch, Harrison. Sub: Potter.

SWINDON TOWN: Downsborough; Dawson, Thomas; Butler, Burrows, Harland; Heath, Smart, Smith, Noble, Rogers. Sub: Jones.

Referee: Mr J. Hunting (Leicester).

GOALS



SHEFFIELD (Luton) 57 min.

LEWIS (Luton) 77min

Attendance: 17,250

Less than a minute later Rogers weaved further magic down the right wing, shrugged off a crunching tackle by Branston, but there was Davie again to show a magnificent bit of anticipation in cutting off the cross at Smart's feet.

It was Davie again who saved the situation for Luton when he stopped a shot on the turn from Noble that was destined for the net.

The Town were hanging on grimly, and their home record which they have held so proudly all season looked in danger of being shattered by a Swindon side that had undergone a half-time transformation.

Luton got the ball into the Swindon half and chasing a high Rioch cross Sheffield collided with Downsborough and the Swindon goalkeeper had to receive lengthy treatment.

Loitering

Sensing a weak link in the Swindon make-up Town had their confidence restored, and against the run of play they went ahead in the 57th minute.

Harrison, loitering on the left, swung across a high centre just out of Downsborough's reach. Instead of running forward to head for goal

SHEFFIELD dropped back and hit the ball first time past the Swindon goalkeeper into the corner of the net.

Two minutes later Sheffield almost added to his glory when his hard left foot shot scraped the angle of the goal.

Lewis continued his duel with Harland with gusto, and both of them appeared to be relishing in the effort involved.

But Lewis was still being caught off-side in some hairline decisions and if looks could kill the linesman under the main stand would never have left the ground.

Slipping inside

After a period of rugged midfield play Luton went further ahead in the 77th minute.

The goal was started by a good move on the left between McDerment and Harrison. McDerment almost lost possession but fought hard to keep the ball and got it across to French.

French beat two men before slipping inside to LEWIS, who wasted no time in hitting Luton's second goal with a first-time shot.

But for a smart bit of fielding by Downsborough, Harrison would have had the third two minutes later.



One in the eye for Luton goalscorer Laurie Sheffield — or so it seems as Swindon 'keeper Downsborough attempts to punch clear

ween Luton and Oxford
hourly and the Saturday
the route, the Monday
change-giving machines.
s have been adapted and
one-man operation from
Green Line coach service

UP