

SHEFFIELD GOAL OUT OF THE BLUE

Missed chances by both teams

By CHILTERN

THE FANS who went to Kenilworth Road expecting a top-of-the-table thriller were sadly disappointed in the first half as both sides struggled to find their true form.

However, Swindon were the first to click and were giving the Town's defence a severe testing when Laurie Sheffield scored a timely goal to put Luton ahead after 56 minutes.

All stand tickets for this vital encounter were sold well before kick-off time, and many people were disappointed.

In fact, brisk business was being done in tickets for the FA Cup-tie with Ware next Saturday and the League game with Bournemouth a fortnight today.

There was some strengthening of the Town by the return after injury of Terry Branston, which meant that with Alan Slough switching to right-half there was no place for Keith Allen.

In fact there were four changes in the forward line, brought about partly by the recall of wingers Graham French and Mike Harrison.

The switch was completed by a change of places for Laurie Sheffield and Brian Lewis, but this seemed to be a mere change of numbering.

FOLLOW

On the other hand, Swindon, who brought a very big following, were able to field the team which beat Derby County in the League Cup replay on Tuesday.

Branston won the toss so the Town kicked-off towards the Oak Road goal.

Swindon were the more lively in the opening minutes, and gained a free-kick when Branston fouled Noble, but this came to nothing and the Town made some ground on the right where French was finally forced into touch.

However, he came again and from his cross there was a typical Rioch burst but unfortunately he shot wide from the edge of the area.

Now the Town were begin-

TEAMS

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

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

Referee: J. Hunting, Leicester.

ning to gain confidence and Slough was heavily scythed down by Harland as he sought to make a break through. He pushed the free-kick sideways to Rioch who was yards too high with his shot.

COVERED

Harrison came into it for the first time when he rounded Dawson before passing to Lewis, whose shot was easily covered by Downsborough.

There was not a great deal in it, but the Town were beginning to move promisingly in attack.

So far, Rioch had been off target with his shooting and for the third time after making a reasonable opening he shot wide.

This was followed by an exciting break by Lewis who left Burrows trailing behind when he fastened on to a clearance by Bannister.

In the end, though, the converging forces of Swindon defenders proved too much for him and all he gained was a corner, which Downsborough picked off the head of Branston.

A period of slack work by the Town, featuring some inaccurate distribution, had the effect of putting Swindon on top for a spell, but their finishing had not caused the Town much trouble.

For one thing they were being bothered by the Town's operation of the offside trap.

APPROACH

Nearest approach to a goal came after a quarter-of-an-hour when Lewis worked the ball cleverly on the left wing before making a centre to which Sheffield jumped high and his header went inches over the top.

Neither team had settled down to really live up to its high reputation and in turn the Town were now being bothered by offside tactics.

Slough, who was spending much of his time trying to drive on the attack, made another break which ended with a bad centre from French.

Most serious task Davie had had so far came when he had to go down to keep out a drive from Butler, but generally speaking the finishing was unimpressive.

ment over the loudspeakers asking the crowd behind the Oak Road goal to refrain from whistling, otherwise the referee had threatened to stop the game.

A good chance fell to Noble from a pass by Smart, following some slack defensive covering, but the inside-left, shooting too hurriedly, was a yard wide.

CHANCES

Odd chances were cropping up for each team and Smart missed one for Swindon by shooting wide of the near post.

Far too much of the play was of a scrambling nature and there were too many stoppages for this to be anything approaching a classic.

Swindon's main danger man, Rogers, had now switched to the right wing, and Dougan who had been playing him very well went across with him.

Best scoring effort for some considerable time came from Slough from the edge of the penalty area and Downsborough, throwing himself to his left, pushed the ball for a corner.

This brought some activity in front of the Swindon goal until a quick clearance sent Heath racing down the left wing where he was stopped rather brusquely by Rioch.

Handball by Burrows gave the Town a free-kick on the edge of the centre circle, but Bannister landed the ball tamely in the hands of Downsborough with the rest of the Swindon defence coming out swiftly.

Then Harland got in the way of a pile-driver from Rioch which struck him on the head and dazed him.

There was unsympathetic laughter and cheers from the crowd, as he dropped like a log!

However, he recovered almost immediately.

As the interval approached the Town were marginally on top, but really a goal to either side did not look a likely event.

Just on the stroke of half-time the Town gained a corner on the right which French placed well and Downs-



Laurie Sheffield — scored after 56 minutes.

borough cut it out in the face of a challenge from Branston.

Immediately after this there was a dazzling break by Harrison who laid on a great chance for Sheffield, who gathered the ball, and from about 12 yards shot wide.

Half-time:

LUTON T. 0
SWINDON T. 0

In the first minute of the second-half, Swindon had a great chance of taking the lead when Rogers sent Smart racing for goal with a through pass.

Davie did the only thing open to him by advancing quickly and saved the situation by sticking out a foot and deflecting the inside-right's shot.

At the same time it was a shock and a warning to the Town that they could not afford slackness in covering.

Rogers had resumed at outside-left, but now switched again, with Dougan going over with him.

In fact the position now so far as the Town were concerned, with Swindon beginning to apply the pressure, looked fraught with danger.

They might have gone ahead when Smith broke clean through only to be deterred by the quick advance of Davie who partially cleared the ball to Noble. He couldn't hit it properly and the ball was scrambled off the line!

Certainly Swindon were

being most prodigal with their scoring chances and Noble should have left Davie with no earthly opportunity when Smart laid the ball on for him in front of goal.

As it was, Davie was able to dive and save full-length as he did from Smart a minute later.

In fact, at this juncture the Town were being given the run around and the goal-keeper was in action again saving from point-blank range from Noble.

All the Town could manage in response to this was a shot by Slough that was much too high.

Downsborough was injured as the Town fought to get back into the game, and there was quite a hold up while he recovered.

Finally, he was able to carry on but with a pronounced limp.

Then at last with 56 minutes gone the Town broke the deadlock with SHEF-

How the goals came

SHEFFIELD for Luton after 56 minutes.
LEWIS for Luton after 76 minutes.

FIELD atoning for two previous misses by coolly side-footing into the corner of the net a centre from Harrison.

If ever a goal came in timely fashion this was it because the Town had been in grave danger of losing their grip.

SAGGING

This goal did a lot for the Town's sagging confidence and there was nearly another when Sheffield swung round quickly on the ball and narrowly missed the angle of the wood-work.

Then there seemed to be a glaring case for a penalty award when Harland handled inside the area, but the referee waved on play.

Harland was penalised again for a foul on Lewis who was receiving some rough treatment and then tried to get some of his own back by a foul on Burrows.

Swindon were still fighting hard to equalise but had not regained the glittering form they showed immediately after the interval.

Harrison embarked on an ambitious run that took him past three opponents before he found Rioch, who, after failing to control the ball in the first place, had his shot deflected for a corner.

Davie was in courageous action again, diving at the feet of Burrows following a free-kick for a foul by Dougan on Rogers.

Then the Town swept away again, with McDerment joining the attack, and it led to the second goal from LEWIS after 76 minutes.

The final pass was laid on by French who pushed the ball forward to Lewis, who swung away at it first-time and steered it safely into the corner of the net away from the diving Downsborough.

Harrison seemed to have developed a limp and had treatment on the touch-line, but he returned immediately.

A couple of corners came the way of the Town, who were now firmly on top, and from the second French shot rather tamely wide.

There could have been another goal for the Town when the ball ran loose in front of goal, but French, swinging away, didn't get hold of it properly.

With about five minutes left, Swindon should have got back into the game but Butler somehow managed to pull his shot wide.

Result:
LUTON 2
SWINDON 0

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