

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. PORTSMOUTH.

On Saturday last the Luton team journeyed to Portsmouth to play a match in the above League at Fratton Park. There was a big gate, about 9,000 witnessing the game, and nearly £270 was the financial haul. The teams were as follows:—

Portsmouth: Reilly; Turner and Wilkie Blyth, Stringfellow and Cleghorn; Marshall, Cunliffe, Bedingfield, W. Smith and Steve Smith.

Luton: Ord; Lindsay and Sharp; Hawkes, White and Williams; Durrant, Blessington, Brown, Tierney and Colvin.

Wilkie won the toss and Brown kicked off against the wind. The Luton right wing immediately ran down, and Blyth conceded a corner in checking Durrant, but the kick was easily got away. Pompey returning retaliated, and Marshall took a corner without results, a free kick to the visitors enabling them to clear the danger. Pompey kept up the pressure, and from a pass by Marshall Cunliffe had an opening which he was unable to utilise owing to Sharp's activity. Ord easily cleared from W. Smith, and in the next minute Bedingfield just missed scoring from a centre by Steve Smith. Wilkie saved cleverly from Tierney and Colvin, and Pompey resumed the aggressive. Both sides showed some pretty passing, and after a clever piece of combination, in which all the Portsmouth forwards took part, Bedingfield had a fine shot kicked out by Sharp. Brown was penalised for fouling Stringfellow, and a free-kick was only got away with difficulty. A short spell of mid-field play followed, and then Pompey again pressed. Eleven minutes from the commencement Cunliffe headed through the first goal from a centre by Marshall.

Restarting Portsmouth had the best of the game. Lindsay was guilty of a foul upon Steve Smith, but the free kick could not be improved upon. Immediately afterwards Marshall had an awkward shot punted away by the goal-keeper. Reilly distinguished himself with a wonderful save from Tierney, and a moment later Blessington struck the cross-bar with a fast shot. Tierney received the ball on the nose, and had to leave the field for repairs. On his return Luton had rather more of the game, and from a centre by Colvin, Durrant shot high over the bar, when he had a clear course in front of him. Tierney only remained on the field a few minutes, and then again sought the dressing room.

Towards half-time Luton attacked in plucky fashion, and with Tierney back on the field they had quite as much of the game as their opponents. Nothing further was done before half-time.

On resuming, Luton made several good attempts to score, but the home defence was safe. Pompey's goal had a narrow escape from Colvin, and then Blessington got the ball past Reilly, only, however, to have the point disallowed for offside. Free kicks were rather numerous owing to foul play. Cunliffe shot over the bar from a pass by Bedingfield, who had just been the victim of a foul by White. Williams was next penalised for a foul, and White was also pulled up for unfair tactics. Durrant shot the ball on to the top of the net and Brown almost equalised with a splendid shot, but it just sailed the wrong side of the post. Luton had a fair share of the play at this time, and Durrant spoilt a good pass from Brown by standing offside. The Portsmouth backs had plenty to do during the next five minutes, and the Luton forwards were warmly applauded by the spectators. Colvin distinguished himself with a clever dribble, but was smartly stopped by Wilkie, and Portsmouth had another look in. Marshall was badly fouled by Williams, and from the free kick Bedingfield headed outside the posts.

Reilly had no difficulty in negotiating a long shot from Tierney, and once again the locals' right wing transferred play to the other end. Sharp conceded a corner in stopping Marshall, but the danger was easily averted, and a rush to the other end by Brown let in Durrant, whose shot sailed over the top of the bar. Turner was fairly beaten by Colvin whose centre was, however, coolly thrown away by Reilly. Stringfellow was injured, and the home team continued the game one man short. Luton pressed on resuming, but they were soon driven back, and Ord was called upon to save from Marshall. In the last minute Blessington shot outside from an offside position, and Luton were attacking when the final whistle sounded with the score:—

Portsmouth 1 goal

Luton 0 goals

NOTES ON THE GAME.

In some notes on the game, a writer in the Portsmouth 'Football Mail' says :—

If the truth must be told it was a disappointing game. The visitors commenced to indulge in foul and rough play directly they found they were being outplayed, and it was rather surprising, considering the amount of fouling indulged in, that none of the local players were seriously injured. There can be no doubt that the tactics adopted by a number of the visiting team had the effect of putting several of the local eleven off their usual game—it was risky at times to get near Lindsay, Sharp, and White! In the first five minutes Lindsay commenced his tricks, and had he not been promptly penalised might have influenced his comrades to an even greater extent.

The best piece of play of the whole match was that which led up to the only goal scored. Rarely after that did the local's front rank get so well together. In the second half the forwards fell off to a remarkable extent. Marshall sent across some ripping centres, but the inside men were unable to take advantage of their opportunities. Roger Ord kept goal with all his well known skill. Once in the second half he saved in brilliant fashion three shots sent in one after the other.