

FOOTBALL NOTES.

[BY "SPECTATOR"]

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

PORTSMOUTH v. LUTON.

LINDSAY ORDERED OFF.

Portsmouth and Luton met at Portsmouth on Saturday afternoon and the weather being fine, a large crowd turned up to witness the first League contest played on the Portsmouth enclosure this season. The team were as follows:—*Portsmouth*.—Reilly (goal), Burgess and Wilkie (backs), Blyth, Stringfellow, and Houlker (half-backs), Marshall, Cunliffe, Brown, W. Smith, and S. Smith.—*Luton*: Frail; (goal), Lindsay and Sharp (backs), F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes (half-backs), Durrant, Blessington, Moody, Gall and Allsopp.

Mr. A. Farrant, of Bristol, was the referee.

The weather was tremendously hot, and the sun blazed down with almost tropical intensity when the teams lined out. Burgess won the toss, and elected to defend the Fratton goal, having the sun at the home players' backs. What little wind there was blew across the ground. Upon Moody starting the ball, the home forwards went down in a body, and Brown was in a good position when robbed by Lindsay. The Luton front rank at once retaliated, Durrant initiating a smart run. Burgess partially cleared. Lindsay kicked behind.

Portsmouth immediately attacked, and Frail had a narrow escape, a corner ensuing. This was got away, and Luton were again prominent on the right, but Houlker robbed Durrant in fine style, and the home forwards went away. Lindsay letting Brown through near the penalty line, he swung the ball across to Marshall, who got in a terrible cross shot, the ball travelling a foot too high.

Luton were by no means prepared to submit quietly, and their forwards, chiefly the right wingers, were frequently getting away, and on one occasion Houlker and Wilkie had their hands full. The ball, however, was eventually got out of danger, and Steve Smith broke away. This was followed by some good play by the home forwards, Cunliffe narrowly missing heading through right in the goal mouth.

Lindsay eventually relieved the pressure, and Allsopp and R. Hawkes were mainly responsible for a transfer of hostilities to the other end, where, however, Burgess prevented further trouble by kicking into touch. Stringfellow and Blyth were next conspicuous in checking the rushes of the visiting vanguard, and the former gave Steve Smith a splendid opening, but the Villan mis-judged the flight of the ball, which passed outside. Marshall brought Sharp down heavily. Play for a time continued in favour of Portsmouth, whose front rank were working well in union, although the Luton defenders offered a sturdy resistance.

Good placing by Blyth gave Cunliffe a good chance, but White robbed him of the ball, and play was again transferred to the Portsmouth end of the ground, where Allsopp was prominent. R. Hawkes got in a fine shot from 20 yards out, which Reilly disposed of, and then Durrant was twice penalised for fouling Houlker, who was playing a good game. Lindsay was next pulled up for fouling Brown, and then Luton set about their work with great zest, and after Durrant had fairly worried Wilkie, he got the ball again and put it through just as the whistle went for off-side.

A foul against Stringfellow was the next incident, and Lindsay placed the ball well, but Stringfellow and Brown got it clear, the latter running it into touch. The visitors again took up the running, and from a pass by R. Hawkes, Blessington missed an easy opening, screwing the ball a lot wide. From a long forward pass by Houlker, Cunliffe struck the post with a beautiful dropping shot.

Portsmouth transferred the scene of operation, and W. Smith should have netted the ball for a fine pass by Blythe, but shot high over the cross-bar. A corner was given, and Frail just managed to put the ball outside the post from an exciting melee in the goal mouth. Brown afterwards got in two lovely shots, but Frail dealt with both of them in fine style.

Brown continued to work very hard and quite deserved the success that rewarded his efforts after a little over half-an-hour's play, when he received the ball from the right wing and beat the old Middlesbro' custodian with a beauty.

After this the game underwent a sudden and remarkable transformation. Whereas in the first half-hour the home forwards could seemingly do nothing right in the shooting direction, within five minutes afterwards they were no less than three goals ahead, W. Smith obtaining the second one with a fast short range shot, and Steve the third with a lovely oblique drive.

With only five minutes to go, Luton tried hard to recover their position, and Moody had a fine shot disposed of by Reilly. The visitors, however, were quickly beaten back, and Marshall got in a lovely dropping shot, which Frail disposed of. The game continued fast and interesting until the end of the first half when the score was:—

PORTSMOUTH, 3 ; LUTON, 0.

Directly after the kick off, Brown worked the ball down into the goal mouth, but was given off side. Sharp got the ball away, and immediately play was stopped owing to a foul by Lindsay on S. Smith. The popular left-winger was laid out, and amid much excitement the referee ordered Lindsay to leave the field of play. Smith also had to retire, owing to his injury.

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Portsmouth, upon play being resumed, at once settled down to a steady attack, and Frail was often tested. The Strawplaiters were inclined to play a somewhat vigorous game, and both Durrant and White were penalised. Sandy Brown was conspicuous with a pretty dribble, but his pass to W. Smith travelled too far out, and was lost into touch.

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Just afterwards Marshall struck the upright with a lovely straight drive, but the Portsmouth players were seriously handicapped by the Luton team playing the one-back game. Steve Smith was able to resume after quarter of an hour's play, and met with a hearty reception as he emerged from the dressing-room. Marshall again tried a capital shot, but without result, and Luton, by means of R. Hawkes, took the ball to the other end where, however, Burgess relieved with a big kick.

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After this Luton were hemmed in, but only a fruitless corner rewarded Portsmouth. A foul against Marshall gave Luton another chance; but they did not benefit much from the opportunity. Just afterwards a free-kick was nicely taken by Sharp and the home defence was extended. The ball was got clear, and twice the Portsmouth forwards got away, but were given off-side.

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Luton attacked and Reilly disposed of a good shot from Gall. Upon Portsmouth getting to the other end again, Steve Smith ran round Sharp and got in a fast shot, which Frail kicked away. Luton again retaliated and Reilly punched away from the midst of several players, while the home defence was directly afterwards severely tested, and only got the ball away after a hard struggle. Steve Smith received another pass from his brother near the half-way line, and dribbled down to within 10 yards of goal before getting in a ripping oblique drive, which Frail judged to a nicety, and effected a brilliant save.

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At the other end Durrant was well-placed when given off-side, and then the visitors made a mess of a good chance by faulty shooting. Reilly almost made a mistake with a shot from Durrant, and was lucky to get the ball away. By continuing the one-back game Luton completely spoilt the match, as no sooner did the Portsmouth forwards get going were they given off-side.

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Sharp fouled Brown just outside the penalty line after the centre forward had tried a clever individual run. The ball was again taken to Reilly's end, but was quickly returned. All the home forwards in turn did some excellent individual work, and kept Frail well occupied. There was little interest in the game towards the end, and the spectators were beginning to leave the ground some minutes before the final whistle went. The final score was:

PORTSMOUTH, 3; LUTON, 0.

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The Luton team could hardly be expected to win against Portsmouth, but they put plenty of heart into the play, especially in the first 20 minutes. Then they had very nearly all the game, but when once the score had been opened the homesters were never satisfied, and did not rest until they had added two other points. At half-time the score stood at 3-0 in favour of Portsmouth.

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Soon after the restart Lindsay was sent off the field. It appears that he was beaten by Steve Smith near the half-way line, and, then it is said, he deliberately kicked the Portsmouth player off his legs. There was a great deal of excitement amongst the spectators. The referee promptly did his duty, and Luton played with 10 men for the rest of the game. The one-back game was indulged in, and the match from a football point of view was necessarily spoiled.