

FOOTBALL NOTES.

[BY "SPECTATOR"].

THE SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

PORTSMOUTH DEFEAT LUTON.

FINISHED IN DARKNESS.

The return Southern League match between these teams was played at Luton on Saturday before a large crowd, notwithstanding the fact that an extra sixpence was charged to those who had not obtained their tickets before the day. "Pompey" very early in the season had entertained the locals, and had beaten them by three goals to nil. There was an incident in connection with the match of unpleasant memory. The following were the teams:—*Luton*: Frail; Lindsay and Williams; F. Hawkes, White, and R. Hawkes; Durrant, Blessington, Gall, Moody and Woods. *Portsmouth*: Reilly; Turner and Wilkie; Stringfellow, Chadwick, and Houlker; Marshall, Cunliffe, Brown, W. Smith, and S. Smith. Referee, Mr. J. W. Bailey (Leicester), linesmen, Messrs. T. J. Tappin (West Ham) and Griffiths (Millwall).

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It will be seen that Allsopp was not playing, and his place was taken by Woods, who has figured in the reserves with some success. Luton won the toss, and when Lindsay signalled that he would play with the wind in favour of the locals there was an encouraging cheer. Portsmouth defended the railway end goal. Brown started the ball towards the Bury Park end, and the visitors got down and caused a bit of trouble. A free-kick helped them forward, but Luton forced them back. Lindsay was early prominent, and throughout the game he was everywhere when he was wanted. Luton made an incursion on the right by means of a run by Durrant and Blessington, but Wilkie relieved.

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The visitors then retaliated and during a period of pressure Steve Smith placed uncomfortably near the post; but was given off-side. A foul against Portsmouth helped Luton down again and another free-kick should have been given for hands but apparently the referee did not see it. Subsequently the spectators cheered wildly when it was seen that Durrant had got the ball into the net. He received the ball which apparently touched Houlker, some 30 yards out and put in a splendid shot which totally beat Reilly. For some reason not apparent to one of the spectators the referee disallowed the point.

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There was intense dissatisfaction at this decision. The only conclusion the spectators could arrive at was that Durrant was judge to be off-side. Possibly Mr. Bailey did not see the ball touch Houlker. At any rate the fact remains that Luton were robbed of a valuable goal which might have made all the difference to the game. Not by any means deterred by this piece of hard luck, the Luton lads came again and Durrant placed by the goal. The home side was penalised soon afterwards, but nothing resulted from the free-kick.

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Woods was showing a marvellous amount of pluck on the left, and about this period of the game put in a dashing run. He went for the tall Stringfellow and robbed him of the ball and then commenced a run on his own, which threatened, but did not result, in danger. Hands against both sides followed, and though both kicks were well taken nothing came of them. Portsmouth had a rare slice of luck just afterwards. Durrant was close in and shot, and the goalkeeper rather luckily fisted over the bar. A good many people, including Reilly, were of the opinion that the Luton man was off-side, but the referee gave a corner, which was of no use.

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Luton were having considerably the better of the game, but Portsmouth put in a good run and Brown placed just by the post. From the goal-kick Woods sent away finely on the wing and concluded by charging the goalkeeper, but Reilly was safe. Bob Hawkes robbed the left wing and put in a shot which went wide. Blessington did a similar service on the right, but his effort met the same fate. Portsmouth evidently soon came to the conclusion that the only safe thing to do was to kick out, and this course they adopted.

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An accident to Stringfellow occurred, he stepping backwards against Woods's foot, which was waiting to stop the ball, which just before had alighted on the Portsmouth half-back's head. After a short rest he was able to resume. During a period of pressure Gall secured the ball and put in a clinking shot just underneath the bar. Reilly caught it safely and kicked out. Following a free-kick taken by the Luton captain a difficult shot was put in at the Portsmouth goal, and Reilly could only save at the expense of a corner.

Woods tricked Stringfellow very nicely and running down shot, but the ball went wide. Lindsay was playing a grand game. Reilly next got hurt. He fell down full-length at the ball and his head came into collision with Moody's knee. As a result the goalkeeper's head was cut, and Dr. McArthur advised him to go off and have it stitched. This he declined to do, but continued to play on until half-time, when the wound was attended to. Nothing further happened up to the resting period, when the score stood :—

PORTSMOUTH, 0 ; LUTON, 0.

The teams were rather a lengthy time in coming out, and the period of waiting was filled up by a selection by the Red Cross Band. The first incident was a tussle between Lindsay and S. Smith. The referee decided that Lindsay had fouled his opponent, and accordingly gave a free-kick against the home team. Williams was also penalised for fouling. Woods got away on the left, but ran the ball behind. The crowd on the terrace side of the ground gave the junior plenty of encouragement. Luton pressed considerably, and F. Hawkes put forward nicely, but Moody headed just by the post.

Williams gave a corner away, the ball going a long way from the direction intended. Frail ran out to save it, but the ball bounced far over his head. Woods, in his anxiety, was offside. A foul against Luton came to nothing. One of the linesmen got into bad favour with the crowd who booed him. At length a foul close in gave Portsmouth their chance. From the kick Brown very luckily headed through.

Play after this was a bit rough. Durrant and Houlker got at loggerheads, and one of the forwards went and told the referee of something that Frail had done to him. A foul against Portsmouth gave Luton an opportunity of getting down and Houlker back-heeled Durrant in the subsequent play. The referee and the players held on impromptu meeting in the centre of the field and no doubt the official in charge had something to say to their mutual advantage. Shortly after this Brown went down the field and though hampered by the backs he managed to get the ball in the net, thus giving the visitors a lead of two goals to nil. Brown certainly worked hard for the point.

From the restart Luton went away and a corner resulted which was, however, safely cleared. Brown next got his knee twisted in a collision with White and had to be taken off the field for repairs. A foul on Bob Hawkes was duly noted, but hands against a Luton man followed and rendered the kick of no avail. After this little of the play could be seen by the spectators. To those on the grand stand the incidents on the other side of the field were quite shut out by the darkness. The referee was said to have consulted the linesman on the terrace side of the ground.

The result was that the match continued, greatly to the danger of the players, and the inconvenience of the spectators. Lindsay once spoke to the referee, probably about the darkness, but that official ordered the game to continue. It is said that Durrant got the ball again into the net, but of this no one 20 yards away was absolutely certain. The referee eventually blew his whistle with about five minutes to play—including the minutes lost through the game being stopped—but he stated that full time had been played. When the whistle blew the score stood :

PORTSMOUTH, 2 ; LUTON, 0.

A contemporary says :—“ Quite 15 minutes from the finish the crowd struck matches, and also set light to any paper they could lay their hands upon to demonstrate the fact that it was impossible to follow the game. Still, the referee allowed the game to proceed until, according to all the watches held by the Luton officials, there was quite four minutes to go, when he called time. During the closing minutes Durrant again put through, but once more his goal was disallowed for what reason it was impossible to see in the darkness. When the home officials learned that, according to the referee, full time had been played, they were, to put mildly, simply dumbfounded.”

The matches on Saturday resulted as follows :—Southampton 4, Brentford 0, at Brentford ; Bristol Rovers 1, Northampton 1 ; Kettering 1, New Brompton drew, a pointless game resulting in a draw ; Tottenham Hotspurs 4, Queen's Park Rangers 0, at Kensal Rise ; Swindon 2, Millwall 1, at Millwall ; Reading 6, West Ham 0, at Reading ; Wellingborough 2, Watford 1, at Wellingborough.