

LUTON v. PORTSMOUTH.

A SPLENDID VICTORY.

One of the best games witnessed in Luton was played on Saturday afternoon, when Luton opposed Portsmouth, and succeeded in winning by 3 goals to 1. Thus this season the Blues have halved the points with "Pompey." Last November, Luton just lost by the odd goal at Portsmouth. It was said that Portsmouth were then in their best form. They still retain a wonderful amount of dash, and the exhibition which they gave on Saturday was one of the best. It was, however very much a matter of Jack being as good as his master. Portsmouth showed better training than Luton, but they just caught the locals on their tip-top form.

Somehow or other, Luton supporters are not particular admirers of Fulham, but it would seem that the London team are going to be largely assisted by Luton in winning the championship again this year. The defeat of Portsmouth by Luton practically secures the premiership of the Southern League for the "Cottagers."

The spectators numbered about 7,000. The home team showed good combination from the start. A corner fell to them, and, being well placed, produced a rare tussle in front of goal. Gittins got his foot to the ball and set up number one for Luton before the game was four minutes old. Portsmouth fell away a good deal after this. Luton, on the other hand, were doing everything right, and were constantly invading their opponents' territory. Less than ten minutes from the start, Gittins scored the second point.

The home side maintained the pressure, and fairly shook the Pompey defence to pieces. Platt had not a lot to do in goal, and the shots sent in to him lacked sting. Half-time came with Luton ahead by the two goals scored.

The second half opened with a fine display on the part of both sides. Cook was twice called upon in the first minute. He managed to clear, however, and Portsmouth set off with the best bit of combination they had shown so far. Offside by Dalrymple upset this move, and then Cook was called upon to deal with a couple of long and easy shots. The visitors were now showing improved form, and forced a corner, which came to nothing. Coming again, Barnes had the chance of the match, but sent wildly behind. Portsmouth were now well into their stride, and showed fine combination, but their shooting was bad. Platt was rather lucky in keeping out a long dropping shot.

The home defence were now given their hardest time, but were very safe, and kept a lot of work off Platt. Some long kicking followed, which gained neither side any advantage. Kirby relieved the monotony by trying an individual dash, and looked like going right through, when McCurdy held him up and transferred the play to the other end. The same player came again soon after, but Platt ran out and got the ball away in a clever manner. A long kick by F. Hawkes set Luton's front line in motion once more, and Brown, from close range, notched the third goal with a beautiful shot. Portsmouth made great efforts to reduce the big lead against them, and, after some elaborate passing, Kirby flashed the ball into the net. Both sides were going at top pace when time came.

Result: Luton, 3 goals; Portsmouth, 1.

Jones, who took the place of R. M. Hawkes, was the hero of the afternoon. Of course, Buick is one of the finest halves in the country, but as regards the local men, the left half received quite an ovation, and he well deserved it, because Jones was never so effective as he was on Saturday, being the mainstay of the Luton defence. The captain was not missed in the least, and it is rather singular that when the professional has had to take Bob's place away, the team has done remarkably well. Owing to Hogg having met with an accident at Watford, which may keep him out of the team for the remainder of the season, Jackson was called upon to fill the vacancy, and though he may not inspire the same amount of confidence as the man he replaced he held the position with credit.

Brown has shown a wonderful improvement of late; as some say, "Sandy" has begun to "find his legs" again. The home centre-forward has got into his stride, and while everyone recognises the openings which Brown gives to his partners, this was particularly noticeable on Saturday. At last, Gittins seems to have done something to justify his inclusion in the team. On Saturday he scored two splendid goals, and the ground just suited him. Warner scarcely seemed to make any serious effort.