

Football Notes and News.

By "Grasshopper."

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON LOSE AT PORTSMOUTH.

Though Luton Town again lost on Saturday, it was not a bad performance, considering that the match was played on foreign soil. Portsmouth and Luton are pretty evenly matched, as the results of past seasons go to show; but Pompey has somehow or other had the best of luck, and again on Saturday in beating the visitors by the odd goal of the match Portsmouth was distinctly fortunate.

Last season at Portsmouth the result was precisely the same—1-0 in favour of the home side; but on their own ground Luton won 3-1. Again this season the Town, on the Ivy-road ground, won 2-0, so that the points have been evenly divided.

There is one thing to be said about Saturday's match. Portsmouth's forwards were generally very aggressive, but Luton's defence was fortunately improved for the occasion. Hogg was still unable to take his place in the back line, but Dimmock was once more brought in, and in partnering McCurdy, the local man once more abundantly proved that he is still Luton's best reserve back. Had the visitors' defence been the least shaky on Saturday, Platt must have had a few more goals scored against him. Pearson once more took the centre-forward position, with Moody and Latheron on one wing and Rigate and Rankin on the other. The Luton front string were inclined to shoot a little better, and Cook, the Portsmouth goalkeeper, was rather fortunate in keeping his colours flying to the end.

The weather at Portsmouth was ideal for a football match and Luton kicked off before about six thousand. The visitors opened the attack, a long shot from the wing being headed clear by Buick. The ball had not reached mid-field when the visitors came again, and were awarded a free kick close in. This looked bad for Portsmouth, but the ubiquitous Buick got his head on the ball again and turned it into safety. The home forwards took a long time to get into their stride, and while they were trying to find their bearings play went in favour of Luton. A cross shot by Latheron went straight into the home goal, but Cook jumped up and cleared, and he also saved in sterling fashion from Pearson.

Following this the home forwards got away, and Kirby centred nicely. A clearance was made, but Portsmouth kept at it, and McCafferty nearly beat Platt. A good run and centre by Dix was sadly missed by both Louch and Kirby. A surprise shot by McCafferty failed to catch Platt napping, but the custodian could only save at the expense of a corner. This was nicely placed, but Platt fisted out. Good play by Buick gave Kirby a chance, but he was neatly beaten by R. Hawkes before he could get in a shot. Portsmouth were now having the best of matters, and Platt was occasionally tested, but without success, and half time arrived without either side having scored.

The second half opened with Portsmouth attacking, and for a time the Luton defence was severely harried. Kirby sent a fast shot just wide, and then Dix was robbed by McCurdy when almost through. A run to the other end gave Moody a glorious chance, but he shot wide with a practically open goal in front of him. Thompson made a good clearance from Latheron, and then Birtles became prominent for two good runs and a couple of accurate centres. Play deteriorated after this, and many mistakes were made. McCafferty over-ran the ball when close in, and Louch headed wide with an open goal. McCafferty shot better on a subsequent occasion, but Platt saved. Dix then looked like getting in, but he was beaten by Dimmock.

Although losing numerous chances, the home forwards were persistent in attack, and from a free kick McCafferty at length scored, his shot being a grand one. Portsmouth followed up this success with a hot attack, in which Buick, Kirby, and Louch came near with fairly good shots. A fine header by McCafferty caused Platt to give away a corner. Dix placed behind, but almost scored a minute later. Slowness on the part of Kirby wasted a good opening, and then Rankin got to the other end cleverly. Nothing came of this, and Luton were on the defence to the end. A beautiful shot by Birtles just missed the mark.

Result: Portsmouth 1 goal, Luton 0.