

Football Notes and News.

[By "GOALPOST."]

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. PORTSMOUTH.

MOODY'S FOUR GOALS.

Luton Town are going very strong just now and added fresh laurels to their previous achievements by defeating Portsmouth on the Ivy-road ground on Saturday to the tune of five goals to one. Contrary to what the score might reasonably indicate, the game was by no means a one-sided one—there was, in fact, nothing like 4 goals between the sides. Luton were unmistakably the better team, but on the play, Portsmouth did not deserve to be down more than perhaps a couple of goals, or three at the outside.

It was a game that was interesting from beginning to end, and with the exception of the first quarter of an hour, which it took Luton to find their feet, there was not a dull moment in the whole match. The visitors opened the attack, and went away at "great guns," after Luton had kicked off against the breeze. The teams were:—

Luton Town: Platt; Folley, Gregory; F. Hawkes, Jones, R. Hawkes; Brown, Haycock, Menzies, Moody, and Stansfield.

Portsmouth: A. G. Brown; Smith, Clipston; Digweed, Buick, Beaumont; Birtles, Kirby, Reid, McCafferty, El Williams.

Portsmouth opened the attack and forced a corner, and this being cleared they attacked again, but Birtles shot over the bar. Luton could not break away, and Williams tested Platt with a shot that he was lucky to save. Now Luton had a turn, and Stansfield forced a corner; but this proved valueless. Another corner followed to Portsmouth, and Clipston shot in at long range, but Platt saved in grand style. An attack by Luton saw Haycock obtain a grand opening, but he sent just wide. So far the match was fairly even; there was no hint of the ultimate surprising result. A breakaway by Portsmouth resulted in Reid opening the score for Portsmouth.

Luton played up with spirit after this, and after a scrimmage in the mouth of goal, Moody put the ball through and equalised the score. Towards half-time Luton improved, and following a smart movement by the home string, Moody headed a grand goal, scoring his second point of the match. This lead was further increased a moment later, when Moody again scored and completed the hat trick with a magnificent shot which gave the goalkeeper no chance. Half-time came with: Luton 3, Portsmouth 1.

The visitors were the first to attack on the resumption, but they were soon back again, and Stansfield put in some good work on the home left. Brown also contrived to get across several good centres, but these were not used by the inside forwards, and subsequently the visitors got away again smartly.

Reid had the chance of a lifetime near in, being faced by an open goal, but the best he could do was to hit the bar. Play at this period was of a very even nature, and the ball was taken from end to end with surprising rapidity. Gregory was slow in the home defence, and through his weakness Birtles was able to get through on two occasions. Platt managed to save his final shots each time, however, and the next exciting incident was a breakaway by Brown, the ex-Brentford man. Instead of centring when he should have done, the winger elected to shoot, and the ball passed harmlessly over the bar.

Luton still continued the pressure, but the visiting backs were very sound, and kicked both strongly and accurately. They were forced to capitulate before the end, however, for Stansfield finished a brilliant run by centring with a fast shot, to which Moody put the final touch. Just before the end Menzies was able to score yet another point.

Result: Luton, 5 goals; Portsmouth, 1 goal.

When one saw "Pompey" open the attack with so much "vim," one imagined that Luton were in for a severe defeat. Portsmouth rushed away, and penned the home side in for some time. The local defence was of course a serious cause for anxiety. Folley seemed nervous, and Gregory was none too sure. Indeed had there been a little better combination on the part of the visiting forwards Portsmouth might have been a couple of goals up in the first quarter of an hour. Nothing but the sterling play of the halves, especially Fred Hawkes, saved the home citadel from downfall.

But when the home forwards got into their stride fortunately a different complexion was put on the game. The rival teams got on fairly even terms, and play went from end to end in quick succession. Then a wretched mistake on the part of Platt spelled danger for the Blues. By some misunderstanding the home backs failed to stop the Portsmouth centre-forward. Platt ran out of his charge, but by a bad piece of judgment missed the ball altogether, and Reid safely placed into an open goal.

In the majority of cases, this disaster would have had a serious effect on the locals, and might have given Portsmouth such confidence as to make victory theirs; but contrary to the general rule, instead of Platt's mistake having a depressing effect on Luton, it appeared to only increase their thirst for goals, and at half time they had the satisfaction of having the lead.

In the second half, the visitors, at least on three occasions, missed "absolute certainties" by being too anxious. Twice the "Pompey" forwards had the ball almost under the cross-bar, but luckily for Platt the shots each time went miserably wide.

The feature of the match was, of course, Moody's four goals. The local man missed no chances, and on his own succeeded in putting his side ahead before changing ends. The third and fourth goals were also obtained by Moody. As to the fourth the ball was practically sent into the net by a clinking centre from Stansfield, but as "Bert" gave it the finishing touch, he has to be credited with the point.

Last year Luton beat Portsmouth, at Luton, 2-1, but lost 0-1 away. However, Pompey are not the side they used to be. The defence was "shaky," and their custodian is scarcely a first-class man; though he could hardly be blamed for any of the shots that passed him, he might well have cleared at least one attack from which the locals scored. Buick was the man of the afternoon; the centre-half is worth his weight in gold to Portsmouth, but the side lacked anything like respectable combination, and this was probably the secret of their failure on Saturday.

As to Luton, the forwards combined with rare judgment. The five men all played a fine game, but Brown must practice to shoot. The ex-Brentford man made "rings" round his opponent, but his finishing up lacked judgment. In the home ranks, Fred Hawkes was head and shoulders above the other men. His play was vigorous and clean, and while materially assisting the backs, very cleverly fed the front string. India-rubber Jones was generally in the thick of it. Despite his one bad mistake, "Peter" afterwards rose to the occasion, and brilliantly saved many an awkward shot.