

FOOTBALL.

The Southern League.

PORTSMOUTH v. LUTON.

JONES FAILS WITH PENALTY KICK

LUTON UNLUCKY TO LOSE.

Luton players were most anxious to repay the generosity of their patrons, as expressed by the response obtained to the appeal made during the previous week, by notching their first away victory at Portsmouth. It was a big task to undertake, as never yet have Luton even divided the honours when visiting the southern port, and, as events turned out, it was beyond them on this occasion. **Teams:**

Portsmouth.—McDonald; Thomson and Warner; Digweed, Buick and Yates; Birtles, Kirby, Reid, McCafferty and Dix.

Luton.—Platt; McCurdy and Gregory; F. Hawkes; White and Jones; Brown, Haycock, Menzies, Moody and Stansfield.

Referee: Mr. D. S. Moule, West Ham.

Except for a stiff breeze, the conditions were ideal, the turf being in excellent condition, and when McCurdy won the toss the hopes of the visiting officials rose to the extent of expecting at least the lead at the interval. But at the start Portsmouth were quickly in evidence, and for the opening quarter of an hour did the greater portion of the attacking. This came mainly from the left wing, and clever play on the part of Yates and Dix led up to the first corner of the game, Gregory placing the ball over the line after dashing across to relieve the situation. Brown got away with the ball, but did not travel far before he transferred to the opposite wing, but Buick just blocked Stansfield's and Moody's way and Thornton did the rest with a big return down the field. After a few minutes' midfield work, Stansfield fairly beat Thomson for possession, and gave the ball to Moody, and the latter shot in to McDonald's hands, but there was not sufficient powder behind the ball to force it through.

The game was only eight minutes' old when the opening goal came along, and a pass from Yates gave Dix a grand opportunity, and he promptly availed himself of it, and, showing a clean pair of heels to his opponents, he raced right through into the corner before he dropped the ball into the opposite wing. It fell at the feet of Kirby, and, without hesitating a second, the last-named player volleyed the ball through at a terrific pace. Platt had no chance, and was possibly lucky in not meeting the ball with his face as it it flashed by about a couple of feet away. It was a splendid goal, but in some ways a trifle lucky, for Kirby had no time to think, and simply let drive, the ball rising all the way, and only a very slight upward turn of the foot at the moment of kicking would have sent it yards over.

Pompey continued to attack hotly for some minutes, and by this time their front line had settled down into a more even combination, and the right wing were taking a greater share of the game. From one of his centres, Reid was left in possession and should have scored, but he sent the ball yards over from short range. During one hot attack, Kirby received a blow on the mouth, which caused a stoppage for a minute or two, but it was nothing serious and the game right through was conducted in the best of good feeling. A capital piece of work between Yates, Dix and McCafferty looked threatening, but Hawkes interposed and kicked clear, and the ball travelled to the other end of the field by the aid of Brown, whose centre was, however, dealt with by Buick. Jones returned the ball into the goal mouth with a long drive, but McDonald coming out to it easily cleared. Luton were now doing much better, and play was confined to the home quarters. Indeed, both McCurdy and Gregory remained over the halfway line for a considerable time at this stage, showing the pressure put on the home goal. Still, McDonald was not so busy as anyone would expect from this, Thomson and Warner defending finely, while, of course, Buick was well in the picture. Stansfield, however, managed to clear the opposition on several occasions and once, after

beating both Digweed and Thomson, arrived well in the penalty area in a very promising position, but he was charged over in none too gentle a manner just as he was about to shoot. It was a moot point as to the fairness of the tackle, but the referee paid no attention, and the game went on without stoppage.

Birtle and Kirby put in a run, and Reid as a result had a clear run from goal, but Gregory closed in upon him and effected a smart clearance. Once more Luton broke away, and Moody, well placed, sent wide in rather a tame fashion. A bit later, following a free kick about forty yards out, Moody put in a soft shot which McDonald easily cleared, but the next time Moody sent in a shot McDonald had a deal of difficulty in disposing of the ball; indeed, it was only by the referee intervening the danger was averted. For McDonald fell with the ball within a yard or two of the upright, and Stansfield dashing up tried to force the ball out of McDonald's arms while the latter was on the ground. For some reason the referee blew his whistle, and it was afterwards explained that, in his opinion, Stansfield held McDonald, but this was not apparent from the stand. Indeed, Stansfield himself was thrown by the home goalkeeper as he rose from the tussle in acrobatic fashion. If Stansfield had not previously fouled the goalkeeper this must have been a penalty kick.

Luton continued to press up to the interval without reward, and the teams retired with the score still standing:

PORTSMOUTH
LUTON

One goal
Nil

Portsmouth, on resuming, aided by the wind, pressed strongly, but the Luton defence was very sound, and seldom they got a clear opening. Platt had certainly more work to do than in the first half, but he dealt with everything that came to hand in a confident manner, one daring fist-away from a left wing drive being about the best save of the match. Gradually the game lost interest, caused by the pace being considerably slackened, and the crowd became rather impatient at the tameness. Reid had one splendid opportunity from a centre from Dix. The ball, rolling off Jones, went direct to the home centre-forward standing about ten or twelve yards out with no one but Platt to beat. He put in a mighty kick, and nothing seemed likely to prevent a goal unless Platt could just tip the ball over from a corner, when, to the relief of Luton, the ball struck the cross-bar with a bang and curled over.

Reid on another occasion dribbled through the centre, but just as he was about to shoot White robbed him of the ball in his characteristic style. For a time Portsmouth kept up a spasmodic attack, although their forwards seldom appeared likely to score. Reid was, however, given another chance from a breakaway by Yates, who came right through with the ball, but the champion shot of the Southern League was not on the target on Saturday, and the ball went behind for a goal kick. The crowd were commencing to leave the ground when a great change came over the scene, and for the final ten minutes we had the liveliest football of the afternoon. Luton, who had been rather lamblike since the change of ends, made desperate efforts to save the game, and, to the surprise, of the locals, Pompey were kept on the defensive right up to the finish.

Five minutes from time Stansfield forced a cor-

ner, and this he placed beautifully, and the ball could not be got away by legitimate means, and at last Warner deliberately handled, and the referee promptly gave a penalty. This quite arrested the leaving spectators, and there was a silence that could almost be felt as Jones advanced to take the kick, for a draw at least was feared. Jones put a fair pace on the ball as it travelled along the ground, but in attempting to miss the goalkeeper he sent it a few inches wide and it struck the bottom of the post and was ultimately put behind. This was hard luck, as was freely admitted, but even worse was to follow, for within two minutes, from still another corner, such was the pressure Luton were putting on the defence, a further piece of hard luck came along. Stansfield secured the ball in a very awkward position for scoring, but he managed to screw it in from a difficult angle right over the heads of all the players, who were crowding in the goal mouth, and it struck the inside of the extreme upright, and in a marvellous fashion twisted out of goal, greatly to the relief of McDonald, who was helpless at the other side of the goal. This was the final incident of note, and the spectators were extremely pleased to hear the final whistle with the score still remaining:

PORTSMOUTH
LUTON

One goal
Nil.