

Football Notes and News.

[By "GOALPOST"].

Southern League.

LUTON UNLUCKY AT PORTSMOUTH.

Luton Town were somewhat unlucky at Portsmouth on Saturday, though there are a good many that would say it was not a case of bad luck, but of bad marksmanship. Be that as it may, the Blues were by no means disgraced in losing by the only goal scored in the match. If one remembers right, had Luton scored at all on Saturday it would have been the first goal they ever got at Portsmouth. Yet it must be confessed that they ought to have easily broken this spell, and they had certainly the chance in their hands of at least dividing the points. What with missing time after time in front of an open goal and again failing at a penalty—it was really too bad. But, then, it is no good crying about it now.

Like last, we have also shared the points with Pompey this season. Last year Portsmouth also won at home 1-0, but they lost at Luton 0-2. Last November, it will be recollected, the Blues were victorious by 5 goals to one. So on the score of honours, there is little to grumble about.

Both sides were practically at full strength, excepting perhaps that Luton were without Bob Hawkes. Platt was once more back in goal. The teams were:—

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.

The home side opened the attack from the start, the left wing being conspicuous. Dix put in an effective centre, Gregory putting behind his own goal in order to save. The corner was cleared, but Portsmouth held the upper hand for some time, Gregory being prominent more than once for timely clearances. Reid put in some smart work, but from his pass Dix could do no better than put the ball behind. Luton at length became dangerous, and Moody called upon McDonald to save. The Portsmouth left wing combined so well that the Luton defence could not hold them and the ball being transferred to Kirby, the inside right capped an excellent piece of work with a brilliant goal.

The combination shown by Portsmouth was first-class, and it is a wonder that the score was not increased. Reid tried a surprise shot at close range, but lifted the ball, which grazed the cross-bar in its flight. At length Luton attacked, with the result that Warner conceded a corner. The ball was placed well before the goal, and it was only the timely appearance of Buick that prevented a score. An accident to Kirby necessitated his retirement for a time, during which time play was of a more even character.

A fine burst by Reid promised a score, but he was hustled off the ball before he could shoot. Then Portsmouth gained a corner, from which Digweed put in a good shot, but Platt cleared. Half-time arrived with Portsmouth leading by 1 goal to love.

Upon resuming, Portsmouth had the wind behind them, but play was ragged. Dix was the first to show to advantage with a nice run, but his final shot was easily saved by Platt. Birtles got in a little later and centred, Gregory clearing and giving the visiting forwards a chance to make progress. They were easily repulsed, and Reid and Kirby went clean through to the other end. The latter was favourably placed, but was brought down before he could get a shot.

Stansfield then had a great chance of scoring for Luton, but failed at an open goal. Portsmouth took the game in hand for a time, and Birtles and Dix were continually dropping in centres. Reid was just too late to catch one. Then Dix tried a shot from the line, but Platt fisted away. A long shot from Birtles was also saved.

Portsmouth continued to have the bulk of the play, but they played poorly in front of goal. Good defence on both sides kept the game from being very exciting, neither goalkeeper having really anxious moments. Towards the end, however, there were one or two thrilling incidents.

After Reid had struck the cross-bar, Luton made a valiant effort to equalise. They were awarded a penalty, but Jones sent the ball straight against the post. A minute later a corner was forced, and from this Stansfield also shot against the upright. Luton were decidedly unlucky at this stage, but taking the game all through, Portsmouth were not lucky to win.

Result: Portsmouth, 1 goal; Luton, nil.