

FOOTBALL.

Luton's Narrow Victory Over Portsmouth.

DURRANT SCORES WINNING GOAL.

Southern Alliance match, played yesterday on the Luton Town Ground. Result:—

Luton 4 goals.

Portsmouth 3 goals.

Teams:—

Luton: Mitchell; Elvey and Jarvie; Wilson, Frith, and R. M. Hawkes; Durrant, Wileman, Brewis, Rollinson, and Stevens.

Portsmouth: Heath; Johnson and Dexter; Walls, Hamilton, and Reid; Hogg. Mounteney, Quinn, Buddery, and Shaw.

Referee: Mr. L. Bullimer (Northampton).

Durrant was given a hearty welcome on his re-appearance after so many years' absence from the Luton team. His response was to score the winning goal—but more of that particular incident later. Quite early he was prominent with a fine shot from the right, which passed across the goalmouth and went just outside the far post. A little later he made a good run on his wing, and the next time he came into the picture the Portsmouth goal had a narrow escape. Durrant planted the ball into the lower corner and Heath had to be very smart to get at it. As it was, he could only send the ball for a corner, which Durrant placed well. Wileman reached it with his head, but as well as putting the ball out he became laid out himself by the force of the ball on his head.

Luton had by no means done all the attacking. Buddery, who had come in at inside-left, was often on the move, and once Quinn almost got through, and probably would have succeeded had not Bob Hawkes rushed to the assistance of the backs. The Portsmouth forwards were more consistent in their attacks, while Luton proceeded by dashes. Quinn was an enterprising centre-forward. Once he was getting away nicely when Frith, by his long strides, overtook him and touched the ball away from him to Jarvie, who kicked clear.

The first goal was scored by Rollinson, who had previously nearly netted with a header. On the occasion leading to the goal the preliminary work was done by Durrant and Wileman, who ran the ball up and gave it to Brewis. The centre-forward's shot hit a back and flew off to Rollinson, who was standing quite unmarked near goal and had Heath at his mercy. The Portsmouth men claimed that he was offside. Not being successful with this, they tried to get even with the score, and for a time it looked as though the Luton men would not be able to keep them out. A good shot from Hogg brought Mitchell to his knees. Two of the Portsmouth men rushed at him but could not get at the ball, which was under Mitchell, who then straightened himself up and got rid of it. In a moment he was saving another. Yet another shot came in, and Mitchell, in clearing, received a blow on the head from Quinn, who himself was injured in rushing in.

A penalty for a foul by Dexter on Wileman led to Luton's second goal. Wileman himself took the kick, but hit the post. Heath and another Portsmouth player attempted to get the ball away, and one of them did touch it, but Brewis was waiting his opportunity and applied his head to the ball, with the happiest of results.

Portsmouth's first goal was the outcome of really good work by Shaw, who made a fine run on the left wing. After beating Jarvie he also got the ball past Frith, who had run back. Mitchell just touched it as it came in to the centre, but before he could do more, Hogg had rushed the ball into the net. The equaliser was an offsider. Receiving from the right wing, Quinn tapped the ball to Buddery, who was standing forward with only Mitchell between him and the goal and he had no difficulty in scoring. "That makes up for Rollinson's," was the comment of a Portsmouth supporter.

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There was more merit about Buddery's next goal, which came in the early part of the second half. He and Shaw worked the ball up, and Buddery completed the movement with a beautiful drive into the net high up. The Luton players for a considerable time pressed hard to get up with the Portsmouth score. Durrant figured in a nice individual run, but he placed the ball behind the other forwards and the Portsmouth men had no difficulty in getting it before either the Luton forwards could turn or their halves could come up. Several times the visitors' were in a tight fix, but they always managed to crowd around the Luton forwards and prevent a clear shot at goal, until a penalty for hands against Reid gave the opportunity. Bob Hawkes took the kick and once more the figures were even.

The referee had a long talk with Reid on one occasion, and called him apart so that there were only Reid and the linesmen to hear what he said. He had spoken to Reid once before. Perhaps Reid was rather angry at some of his decisions; even if that were so, all the decisions did not meet with the approval of the Luton supporters, who on more than one occasion strongly challenged them. The home team did much more of the pressing in the latter part of the half. Once Frith dropped in a long shot, which Heath knocked out and Rollinson returned with such force that although Heath got his hands to it the ball seemed to go over the line. At that moment Durrant rushed in to score, but fell over. Heath and the Luton man had to be attended by the trainer.

Stevens had not been seen to advantage at his new position at outside-left, but he improved considerably towards the end and some of his centres were capital. From one of them, Durrant nearly scored, but Dexter's legs came just in the way of the flight of the ball. As a matter of fact, the winning goal resulted from a centre by Stevens, but a good many feet went to its completion. Wileman and Rollinson, if not Brewis also, had an attempt before Durrant finally got the ball and scored before Heath could recover from his previous saves.

Luton, on the whole, were fortunate to do more than draw, though they certainly did more of the pressing towards the close. The Portsmouth forwards, excluding Mounteney, were a busy lot. Elvey and Jarvie did not give their best displays, and frequently Frith and Bob Hawkes had to go back and assist. Stevens was not happy at outside-left until the last quarter of an hour, but Durrant on the other wing displayed some splendid drives. The inside men were not particularly impressive.

The attendance was about 1,000.