

FOOTBALL.

Southern League.

PORTSMOUTH'S DEFENCE TOO STRONG.

LUTON'S FORWARDS FALL AWAY.

The defeat of Luton at Portsmouth on Saturday is due first to the fact that they run up against one of the strongest defences in the Southern League, and secondly because the forwards failed to display the requisite combination of resource and dash to circumvent that defence. It is pretty evident that in order to succeed against a first-class defence Luton must put more sting into their attack. The game was an interesting one to watch, and as Portsmouth were playing at the top of their form the seven thousand spectators were delighted with the display. Included in the spectators were a thousand officers and men who have joined the local battalion of Kitchen's Army, and many wounded soldiers from the local military hospitals.

Rollinson was Luton's best forward, his footwork and generalship being distinctly good, while to him belongs the credit of obtaining Luton's only goal. Simms rarely seemed to get going, but Roberts did fairly well again, being well fed by Rollinson. Macfarlane and Wileman did not show to such advantage as at the Crystal Palace. The half-backs all worked hard, and were fairly sound, and Elvey and Dunn were a sound pair of backs. The Portsmouth forwards were splendidly led by Buddery, who opened out the game smartly, and was not lacking in individual effort. He was particularly well supported by Thompson and Stringfellow on his right, the last-named being quite the cleverest forward engaged. The half-backs were good, and it was a smart move to shift Harwood and Abbot, the former being much better in the centre than on the wing. Potts is improving rapidly, proving an excellent understudy for Warren, and Probert is also developing. Neil, in goal, had nothing that was difficult to save.

Stringfellow gave the home team the lead in the first seven minutes following delightful footwork by James. Portsmouth should have had more goals before ends were changed, but although their forwards continued to play well their shooting lacked precision. After the change of ends Portsmouth attacked almost continuously. After fifteen minutes a free kick was awarded just outside the penalty area, and Walls put in a direct shot, which Dunn should have cleared. He, however, miskicked badly, and before he could recover his equilibrium Buddery dashed in and scored. Mitchell was beaten again five minutes later by Buddery, who this time scored with a shot from a difficult position. Following this Portsmouth seemed to slacken off, and it was during this time that Luton did their most dangerous work. They deserved a goal, and from a centre by Macfarlane, Rollinson scored. Luton continued to persevere, but they never really became masters of the situation, and lost by three goals to one.