

PROGRESS AT PORTSMOUTH.

Until Saturday Portsmouth Club and supporters felt that they had a fine chance of promotion. With a strong playing list, an influential directorate, and control of the players vested in such an experienced judge as Manager M'Cartney, there is ground for optimism and confidence. Yet at the end of the game the Portsmouth people would have changed teams and felt more convinced of appearing in Division II. next season. It is time followers of football in Luton recognised that we have a really good chance of promotion.

True, no two supporters appear to be fully agreed on the constitution of the side, and it is not in any way a slur on the directors to say that all opinions of those round the rails are reflected in the board-room. On the other hand, I think it is a good thing, for it enables every player to get his merits considered, and the constitution of the side depends upon a majority of votes, consequently every player should loyally abide by the decision of the board. The players do, in general, and at the moment the directors' task is especially difficult. This week it is even harder than last, and at the moment of writing I do not like to predict what will be done. Like others, I feel that even the side that played last week can be strengthened, and there may be changes for Saturday's match with Southend United.

The game at Portsmouth was as keen a tussle as we have seen this season, and the point brought away was well earned. Portsmouth have a solid, workmanlike team, capable of leavening a naturally vigorous game with a certain amount of skill. They had the better of the game in the first half, but in the second the Town were better in every respect, and, taking the game as a whole, had more chances of winning. BEEDIE'S goal for Portsmouth was the result of their best piece of forward play and was due to the craft of Stringfellow, who shot across goal when the Town defence was drawn to the right. The Town's equalising goal was obtained through Robson turning into the net a corner kick taken by HOAR.

Weighing up the chances of the forwards at either end, it is significant that Luton's opportunities were usually the result of schemes of attack, whereas Pompey's methods took the form of lusty kicking and fast rushing. Fortunately for the Town the defenders started better than the forwards, and, although they had to capitulate once, speaking generally they were too good for the Pompey forwards. There was no putting the ball anywhere or pushing and wrestling, and all the offences were of a mild character. In this the Town players showed that they appreciated the remarks addressed to them by Mr. Gibbs before the game. There was only one offence by a Luton player that caused any feeling, and that was when Mathieson kicked Martin, but, quite obviously, it was an accident. Mathieson with his back to Portsmouth's goal, was reaching for the ball when Martin swung round him and the former's boot caught the Pompey man's hip, and the latter at once lost his temper. On the other hand, several of the Portsmouth players were guilty of worse offences. Still, the game was in pleasant contrast to the previous meeting of the teams, and was enjoyed much more.

The Town defence played finely, and Lennon's polished display in the first half was the outstanding feature, although Bailey and Tirrell did well. The half-backs took a little time to settle down, but eventually gave a masterly exhibition, being fast, fearless and brainy. There was little to choose among them, and an especially pleasing feature was the understanding they had with each other as well as with the forwards. In the forward line the right wing was the better, both men playing well, and Hoar was about the best forward on the field, with Simms and Butcher close. The left wing was not so good, neither reaching his best.

For Pompey, Robson kept a good goal, and Abbott was the better back. Martin was the pick of a solid line of halves, and Beedie was a forward of merit.

Mr. Farrow refereed better than the previous week, but he gave some curious decisions. Once he gave a free-kick against Walker in midfield for reaching round Cherrett's legs and withdrawing the ball, and yet when Simms had forced a passage between the backs and was on the point of shooting from about six yards' range the referee made no sign when Martin and Probert brought the Town forward down from behind.

On the whole, however, we may be quite satisfied that we brought away a point. Few others will equal the feat.

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" LINESMAN'S " SUMMARY.

" Linesman," in the " Portsmouth Football Mail," says of Saturday's game:—

" The game provided a far better display of football than that at Luton last week. There was very little to complain of from the point of view of roughness, and Mr. Farrow certainly had a better control over affairs. It was a triumph for the defences. The home rear-guard played in such determined fashion that very few chances came the way of Simms and his confreres; while at the other end Tirrell and Lennon made a very capable guard for Bailey and his charge."

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