

LUTON'S FIFTH DEFEAT.

Beaten by Three Goals at Portsmouth.

Portsmouth deserved the points because they were the better balanced side, and the quality of their football was in advance of Luton's, but they were not three goals better. The two goals they got in the first half, one after four minutes' play and the second eleven minutes later, were of the "lucky" type, and the third was due to the weakness of the Town defence twenty minutes after the interval.

The Town were quickly aggressive, but after they had been beaten off Shepherd was called upon, and saved well, but the ball could not be got away following a corner kick, conceded by the keeper in diverting a fine shot from Mackie, and HAINES was presented with a gift through a fortuitous miskick by Meikle, who attempted to shoot, but the ball went across goal to the centre-forward, who was able to shoot into the net. The second goal was obtained by MEIKLE, who got the ball under control, by using his hands, the Town players alleged, and shot hard against the goalkeeper's legs, from whence it glanced into the net. The Town had a full share of the game afterwards until the change over, and the play of the right wing would have been good enough to have brought more than one goal against a less brilliant goalkeeper than Kane, who saved his charge time and again when a goal seemed certain.

The second half goal came from HAINES, who got the ball after good work on the right wing, and although there was time for tackling, the defenders appeared to leave the task to each other, and eventually the ball was shot against the upright, travelled right across goal, hit the other upright, and then glanced into the net.

Another goal should have come, if Meikle had succeeded with a chance from the penalty shot. Tirrell fisted out after a scrimmage when Shepherd was well beaten. There was plenty of powder behind Meikle's shot, but it came within reach of Shepherd, and the ball was lifted over the bar.

The game proved conclusively that Till, Anderson, Butcher and Hoar are

THE BEST MEN

for the right wing side of the team, and Jennings for the centre-half position. There could be little fault found with them, and that was the opinion of the Pompey officials, players and crowd. Good as were the Pompey backs, Till was their equal, if not better. It is too much to say that any player's exhibition is without blemish, but Till's was as near that as could be desired. His duels with the home left wing were often thrilling, and the facility and coolness with which he deprived an opponent of the ball were remarkable. He was occasionally inclined to dally before getting rid, but this fault is now almost at a minimum, and the little back is going to win great favour with the Town crowd if he maintains this form.

Anderson again did well, and his knack of reaching the ball with his feet in much the same manner as one could bring it down with the hands surprised the fleet Beedie on many occasions. Anderson did well as a back, but he is going to be the Town's regular right half, I feel sure. He had a clever and fast wing to face on a ground that affords plenty of working room, and he came out of the ordeal with flying colours. Frankly, having seen him play only once, and that at full-back in the second practice game, I was afraid that he was being pitch-forked into the side to the disadvantage of others, but after seeing him in two games I am bound to say that on this form he cannot be moved.

Jennings was himself. The rousing character of his play against a fast-moving and skilful forward line was invaluable. Haines is not clever, but he is fearless and well nursed. Although he got two goals he did little else, and he was well shaken up when he attempted forcing tactics, for Jennings found that he could not afford to stand on ceremony in dealing with any of the inside opposition, and he and Parker were powerful elements in mid-field. The return of Butcher made Sid Hoar, to use the words of one among a group of spectators immediately under the Press-box,

"A FORK-LIGHTNING RAIDER,

the best forward on the field."

In the first half especially, the Town's right wing pair gave a great display. Against men like Martin and Davidson grit and skill are essential, but the Luton pair raced them "off their legs." Butcher's control was of the best, and he gave both Martin and Tom Parker a lot of shadow-chasing; his feeding of Hoar also gave the winger the opportunity to lead Davidson a rare dance. The winger played even better than at Brentford, for the opposition was stronger, and those who saw his play in that game will know what that means. His centres and shooting were models, and against a less strenuous

assistance would have brought many goals. Of the remainder of the team, while wishing to be generous, it must be confessed that much remains to be desired. Shepherd did better than against Brentford, and some of his work was high-class, but he has not shed his nervousness, and I believe that if he is equal to Gibbon in other things, the latter's experience should put him first. Shepherd may come on when he has ripened.

The left flank gave us much cause for trepidation. There was not the same confidence and understanding there as on the other side of the field. They were triers, of course, but Tom Parker brought to bear his knowledge of his old colleagues' weaknesses, and he shrewdly plied the right wherever possible, and kept the Town defenders on the move. Tirrell played fairly well in the first half, but fell off, and at no period was in his best form. I have some sympathy with the Town captain. His play has never been sure with Roe withdrawn from the left half position, for there has never been the same understanding in defending the left flank when another has taken Roe's place. It appears to me that we made a wrong start, and Tirrell has never got over it.

Walker was good in parts, and while he did better work in this game than against Brentford, he is not the same force in the flank as in the middle.

On the left wing there was a slight improvement, but not enough. Hoten was just as anxious to shine against his old team as was Parker, and his work in general was improved, but he did not give Danskin and Kerr enough work, the former especially. Hoten was a dangerous dribbler, and he was unfortunate with his shooting. Danskin lacked opportunity, and Kerr was too well watched to be often dangerous.

PORTSMOUTH 3 goals

LUTON TOWN Nil

PORTSMOUTH.—Kane; Probert, Davison; Davies, Parker, Martin; Meikle, Mackie, Haines, Watson, Beedie.

LUTON TOWN.—Shepherd; Till, Tirrell; Anderson, Jennings, Walker; Hoar, Kerr, Hoten, Danskin.

Referee: Mr. F. Todman, Croydon.