

POMPEY'S HOPES SLUMP EVEN LOWER NOW

(By NIMROD)

BEATEN by a travesty of a goal in an apology for a football match, Portsmouth's hopes of avoiding relegation sank even lower as a result of last night's visit to Luton.

It was not so much the fact that they failed to obtain a point as the manner of their defeat, which makes the outlook seem so much bleaker.

The forwards played without spirit; the defence made the mistakes of despair. There you have the whole sorry story.

The missed chances—more by a poor Luton side than a poorer Pompey—were just part of it.

One thing is certain. Unless Pompey improve 100 per cent in their remaining matches, they just cannot hope to survive in Division I.

The only goal gave a Gilbertian touch to the play. It was bad luck for Uprichard, the one Pompey player who was at his very fine best, that

are partly responsible for their sorry League plight.

It would be unfair to discriminate between the players. Indeed, it would be difficult to know where to begin.

Let it suffice that the forwards never gave much indication that they could find a way past the "iron man," Owen, and the defenders whom he welded by his example into a most effective spoiling unit.

I mention Clugston only because it was his debut, and very unfortunate it was for him to be so. It was asking too much of a young player to make his first League appearance in what was his third full scale match in five days. The fact that he was hurt early on did not help.

For the most part, the match took on a one-way pattern and the hard-pressed Dickinson made more mistakes than at any other time since he took over at centre-half.

RELIEF FOR POMPEY

The only relieving aspect for Pompey emerging from last night's football was the 3-2 defeat of Manchester City by Arsenal.

Positions at the foot of the Division I table now read:

	P	W	D	L	P	A	P
Man. C.	35	10	7	18	65	77	37
Cardiff	33	9	6	18	47	75	24
Sun'land	33	8	6	19	54	74	22
P'mouth	32	5	12	15	50	77	22
Charlton	35	7	3	25	51	104	16

Pompey have six home matches among their remaining fixtures; Cardiff also have six, but Manchester City and Sunderland only three each.

Three of Pompey's home matches are against Sunderland, Manchester Pompey have to play Cardiff away.

he should have had to suffer the indignity of having such a goal scored against him as that which gave Luton the points.

Centre-forward Groves had a tentative smack at goal from about 30 yards range.

The ball jiggled steadily along the tufty Kenilworth Road turf. It swerved and bobbed at the last moment as Brown came racing across.

Its final "break" beat both players as they went for it. The ball passed through Brown's legs and swerved wide of Uprichard's frantic grasp.

Groves' goal or Brown's? I give it up. I can only describe it as a real "China-man" of a goal.

As such, of course, it was typical of some of the goals which have been scored against Pompey this season and which

No Indication

The match started off with no indication of the depths to which it was soon to descend.

A swift man-to-man movement by Pompey finished with Harris shooting across goal. Another ended with Pickett firing narrowly over from 25 yards.

Then came the first of the Luton lapses. Dickinson missed the ball to let Cullen through and the outside-right, with the goal at his mercy, shot high over the top.

In between first-class work by Uprichard, who made splendid saves on the ground as well as taking the ball confidently and well high in the air. Morton missed two of the easiest of chances by shooting weakly.

McLeod, who appeared to be well offside, was allowed to go on and Pompey were saved only by Uprichard advancing and saving at point-blank range.

Tremendous Shot

Just before half-time, the best was seen of the Pompey attack, when Weddle, receiving from Dale, sent in a tremendous ground shot which might have beaten a lesser goalkeeper than Baynham.

Harris and Clugston also had shots which went close.

But this was a flash in the pan. Little was seen of the Pompey attack after the interval and nothing of note occurred except for the goal in the 60th minute.

The reverse brought a momentary response when Dale flicked the ball forward and Henderson took a great shot on the volley, which Baynham punched clear.

Teams:—
Luton Town: Baynham, Jones, McNally; Morton, Owen, Smith; Cullen, Brown, Groves, Cummins, McLeod.

Portsmouth: Uprichard; McGhee, Mansell; Albury, Dickinson, Pickett; Harris, Clugston, Henderson, Weddle, Dale.

Referee: Mr. A. Bond (Fulham).