

CRYSTAL PALACE v. LUTON.

A BAD SET BACK FOR LUTON.

For three years in succession Luton have experienced very hard luck in connection with the English Cup competition. On each occasion when they had almost worked their way right into the competition proper, they had the misfortune of being drawn away, losing by a narrow margin. History repeated itself on Saturday, when at the Crystal Palace Luton were beaten by the single goal of the match. However, though they were defeated, it is generally admitted that it was not the best team that won.

Early in the season Luton's forward proved themselves star performers at target practice, but, judging from their display at the Palace on Saturday, they have gone clean off, for Hewitson did not have more than a couple of decent shots from this line during the game. The score-sheet at the interval stood blank, but within four minutes from turning round Harker had done the trick with a brilliant drive from about fifteen yards' range, Platt being apparently surprised, for he made not the slightest effort to reach the ball.

After this Luton put more life into their work, and until Warner had the misfortune to get a nasty kick on the ankle appeared likely to equalise almost every minute.

But only once was Hewitson beaten, and then "Sandy" Brown, while standing offside, had the hard luck to have a grand shot from Bob Hawkes strike him, and thus prevent a fine individual piece of work from the Luton captain to go for naught. With Warner off the field, Blackett came up among the forwards for the closing five minutes, but even he could not force a goal.

The Palace forwards were by far the more dangerous line, and but for the brilliant work of the Luton halves would have piled on a big score. While, the Luton centre-half, was about the best player on the field, although Birnie, who occupied a similar position on the home side, ran him pretty close. Platt had several awkward shots to deal with, but he came out in strong light as a clever custodian. Probably the Luton pair of backs were the more brilliant, though this was possibly on account of the greater pressure put upon them. Taking the game through, Blackett was rather too venturesome in dribbling the ball up the field, and several times this resulted in the Palace wingers having a clean run in.

Warner came back for a time after his injury, but he was nothing more than a passenger, and ultimately left the field for good. It is extremely doubtful if he will be able to play again for a few weeks.

Another great disappointment was the gate receipts. It is doubtful if the clubs will have £60 to share between them. There was such little faith in the Town eleven, that only a few hundreds followed them to London. Had the match been played at Luton, the "gate" must have totalled not far short of £150. So the draw has been disastrous for Luton in both ways.

A London football writer says: — "The English Cup matches resulted generally as expected, so far as the Southern League clubs were concerned, the notable exception being Luton, who were knocked out by the Crystal Palace, much to the surprise of everybody—especially the Luton men. The latter can easily blame the ground, which was in a shocking condition, and their luck, which was phenomenally bad. They were miles ahead of the Palace team in skill, in combination, and in all the essentials of good football, but the home side, accustomed to the local mud, played a kick and rush game with much spirit, and from a combined onslaught on the Luton goal managed to score. Their backs afterwards played a grand defensive game, and although Luton were all over them in the last quarter of an hour, the ball was kept out of the net. Very hard lines for Luton.

Writing of Saturday's Cup-tie, "Linsman" in the "Daily Chronicle" says: "The only sensational features of the Cup-ties played on Saturday were in connection with the two ties which stood out from the others in point of interest and importance. In each of these cases the result confounded expectations. Whereas Brighton most honourably figure in the draw for the next round, Luton Town will have the distressing distinction of being the only Southern League club missing from the competition, in the event of Northampton, as expected, defeating West Stanley in the replay. . . I am sorry Luton are out of the Cup, because they have more right to be in it than some of the exempt, but, on the other hand, the Crystal Palace have made a representation which is sure to have a beneficial influence. The Crystal Palace F.C. of the early future may be a very considerable quantity.