

United League.

LUTON v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

Played on the Crystal Palace ground on Saturday. Result:—

Crystal Palace 2 goals.

Luton 1 goal.

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The teams were as follow:—

Luton—Platt; Blackett and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Gallacher, and H. Lane; Warner, Macdonald, E. Dobson, Pickering, and Barnes.

Crystal Palace—Hewitson; Walker and Edwards; Cubberley, Birnie, and Wilson; Wallace, Harker, Watkins, Needham, and Roberts.

Referee, Mr. A. G. Neale (London).

It was unfortunate that a representative team could not go to the Palace on Saturday, for although United League points are not of extreme importance, it would have been somewhat more satisfactory if one victory could have been scored over the Glaziers, seeing that the three previous encounters had resulted in goal defeats.

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Bob Hawkes was unable to get away from business in time, and White had not recovered from his injury; therefore the half-back line was considerably weakened, especially as Fred Hawkes has not really got over his ankle trouble. In addition, neither Blackett nor McCurdy was in the best of health, so the brunt of the defensive work necessarily fell on Platt. It was decided to give E. Dobson another run at centre-forward, thus giving Brown a rest.

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Crystal Palace were giving trials to a couple of half-backs in Cubberly and Wilson, the first-named being an amateur from Cheshunt. In one direction, the surroundings were certainly more pleasant than for either previous match with the Palace, for the sun was shining brilliantly. Still, the turf was soft in the middle and all traces of mud had not disappeared.

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The opening movement promised to find the Luton forwards in an aggressive mood, for Dobson came up the centre in good style and slung the ball out to Warner, who, however, placed wide from a good position. But this was not kept up, and before long Platt was called upon to get the ball out of danger from more than one attempt. A noticeable feature of the play at this stage was the manner in which Barnes was neglected; indeed, it was sixteen minutes from the start of the game before he even touched the ball at all. When he did do so it almost brought about a goal, for his centre was pounced on by Macdonald, and the latter's shot at goal only just missed, practically touching the bar as it sailed over at a great pace.

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Lane tried Hewitson with a clever dropping shot, but the Palace goalie was not to be beaten with such, and he easily disposed of the attempt. The home forwards were also having something to say, and Platt brought off a brilliant save from Watkins close in, after a spell of left-wing attack. No impression was made on the score-sheet until two minutes before the interval. Wallace then got well away with the ball near the touch-line, and, working in, he put across a fine centre, which Needham converted before the Luton defence were really aware of the danger. It was a good goal, and Platt had not the slightest chance with it.

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From the kick-off Luton almost equalised, Warner putting in a good attempt, which was never really got away, although before the goal came along a corner was forced. This Barnes placed finely, and Pickering found an opening, thus bringing matters level right on the interval—a result which about represented the game up to this point.

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In the second half, the Palace played the brighter football and had by far the greater share of the game. Roberts time after time got the ball across in a very threatening manner, and once or twice tried shots on his own. One of these was a regular pile-driver, and Platt earned the applause of the spectators by a truly marvellous punch when it appeared a certain goal.

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Gallacher on one occasion forced the play by bringing the ball through by sheer weight, but Barnes could not quite reach Dobson's pass and the opportunity slipped. The nearest Luton came to taking the lead was about twenty minutes before the finish, when a corner was forced from a centre by Warner. This was taken by Macdonald, who dropped the ball beautifully in front, and twice it was sent in to Hewitson, but the defence held out, and ultimately the play was forced to the Luton end.

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Wallace making a dash down the field, sent the ball across the goal-mouth with a high centre which appeared to be travelling out on the opposite side of the goal, when Roberts just saved it and brought back into play. The ball was bobbing about in front of Platt for a minute or so. At last it went out to Harker, who was lying a bit back, and he scored the winning goal with a clever cross drive over the heads of several players. This was a quarter of an hour before the close, but the players on both sides appeared to be quite satisfied with the result and little serious attempt was made to alter it. About the only incident of note was a heavy charge by Lane on Wallace just as the ball went into touch, and loud calls were made for Lane to be sent off, but the referee did not take harsh measures, and the ball was thrown in, no foul being awarded.

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The Glaziers just about deserved to win by the goal margin, being that wee bit smarter than Luton, who certainly did not play the game they usually do in the Southern League matches. Platt and Gallacher came out best in defence, while as a rule most danger came from the left wing, when they did get a chance to get away. On the Palace side Roberts played a good game, and shot well on occasion, while Wallace, who was none too scrupulous in his methods, also was seen to advantage with many dashing runs down the touch-line. Birnie played a fine game at centre-half, being the pick of the home defence.