

WESTERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

Played at Luton on Monday. Result:—

Luton 1 goal.

Crystal Palace 1 goal.

Luton made considerable alterations in their team for this match, Dimmock appearing at left-back and Jones at left-half, and the front string being quite re-constructed. Rankin played inside-right with Rigate outside, Moody centre, Hall inside-left, and Walders outside. The Palace team comprised—Hall; Collyer and Edwards; Forster, Ryan, and Walker; Roberts, Swann, Woodger, Wickins, and Davies.

Referee, Mr. L. Bullmer (Northampton).

In view of Saturday's disappointment, it was not surprising to find less than a thousand spectators. Possibly many of these came to see how the new forward line would shape, but it is to be feared that they went away with sorrowful hearts. In the first half there was not much to complain of, and some excitement was provided in the opening stages. A terrific shot from Hall struck the custodian fair and square, for he had no time to prepare for it, but the Luton goal afterwards had a much narrower escape, Platt letting a long shot from Roberts slip through his fingers. Luckily, McCurdy had fallen back in goal, and was thus able to kick out.

On the whole, Luton had the better of the game during the first "forty-five," and Hall had two or three troublesome shots from Rigate to deal with, whilst no disgrace would have attached to him had he been beaten by a smart header from Moody, following on a corner-kick.

At the other end, Woodger came near scoring, but Platt ran out and cleared, and then Luton attacking once again, Hall sent the ball out to Rigate, who returned across the mouth of goal. Moody looked a certain scorer, but quite missed the ball, which went out to Walders, and that player scored a very fine goal. Walders was responsible for several good attempts after this, but Hall was very smart in dealing with them, and the interval arrived with Luton leading by a goal to nil.

Over the second half it would be charitable to draw a veil. I don't think I have ever seen even a mere friendly conducted with such an utter absence of spirit as characterised the play of the Luton forwards, two of whom were positively exasperating in the lackadaisical way in which they went about their work. I have no sympathy with people who won't go to see games simply because their side is undergoing a bad time, but I have still less sympathy with footballers whose indifference goes far to rob the sport of all interest.

Fred Hawkes made a couple of gallant attempts to get through on his own, but otherwise Luton never looked like scoring in this half, and they certainly did not deserve to. The general slackness, however, met with its due reward in the last two or three minutes of the game, for Woodger receiving the ball from the left, ran past all opposition and equalised the scores with a shot that gave Platt no chance.

And thus a highly unsatisfactory match ended in a draw. On the play, one could only say that there were two rank bad teams in the field, and if this is the sort of thing we are to expect, I am afraid the Luton directors are in for a very troublesome time. Hall and Woodger were the best men on their side, and apart from his one slip, Platt did well for Luton, but the two most prominent men—from the point of view of good play—were McCurdy and Fred Hawkes, though White also did his full share of the work. As to one or two of the others, I will say nothing—they were beyond criticism.

In contrast to the ineffectiveness of Luton's present forwards, it must be exceedingly galling to the directors to observe the success which three of last season's discarded men are now meeting with. For New Brompton, Pickering has scored five goals, and for Queen's Park Rangers Gittins and Barnes have scored 7 and 5 respectively.

Saturday's gate amounted to only £127, a drop of nearly £50 on the match of a fortnight before, when the receipts totalled £174. On Monday the takings realised only £15.

For the match at Park Royal on Saturday next, further alterations are being made, the following being the team selected—Platt; Hogg (or Dimmock) and McCurdy; R. Hawkes, White, and Jones; Rigate, Fred Hawkes, Hall, Moody, and Walders. I understand it is quite on the cards Hogg will be fit. I wish the same could be said of Pearson.

Fulham are finding the path to First Division honours a much more difficult one than they anticipated, and were beaten at Barnsley on Saturday by 6 goals to nil. They have now only four points for five matches, and are in the bottom half-dozen on the League table.

Hitchin fared badly in their replayed F.A. Cup-tie with Peterborough, being beaten by 3 goals to 1. The winners will now have to visit Luton Clarence in the next round.

Up to Tuesday, there were twenty-seven entries for the Beds Cup Competition, the draw for the first round of which takes place this (Thursday) evening. The number mentioned constitutes a record, and the clubs and leagues that have become affiliated (101) are also more numerous than ever before. There are five leagues, and as one or two clubs are expected to become affiliated shortly, the number of clubs will not be far short of one hundred. There are about forty properly affiliated clubs in Luton.

A Council meeting of the Football Association is to be held to-morrow (Friday), and one of the items on the agenda is a letter from the Beds F.A. approving the action of the F.A. with regard to the new federation of amateur clubs.