

The Southern League.

LUTON v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result :—

Luton 4 goals.

Crystal Palace 1 goal.

The teams were as follow :—

Luton—Jarvis; McCurdy and Gregory; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Haycock, Menzies, Johnson, and Stansfield.

Crystal Palace—Balding; Collyer and Needham; Thorp, Lewis, and Brearley; Garratt, Laurence, Bauchop, Lee, and Woodger.

Referee, Mr. G. Rose (Coventry).

Several alterations were made in the Palace team, the changes being partly the result of the Glaziers' inglorious visit to Burnley on Wednesday, when they were beaten by 9 goals to nil in the replayed English Cup-tie. Johnson, the regular goalkeeper, had sustained an injury to his wrist, Needham returned to his old position at back, and two changes were made among the halves, Innerd and Ryan being the absentees.

There were also changes in the front rank, which was to have included McGibbon at inside-left, but his place being taken by Lee, who made his first appearance for the Palace in a Southern League match. The Luton team was the same as had done duty during the last two or three matches, Moody and Platt again being absentees.

Although the weather during the last few days had been very cold, the surface of the ground was very slippery. The play suffered because of this in the first half, but the men kept their feet much better after the interval, during which time some of the players had studs put on their boots. In the early part of the game Luton tried to be far too clever, and the play was not particularly interesting.

In the second half, however, the open style of play was adopted more by both sides, and the exchanges improved in consequence. The first half had been without any practical result, but within five minutes after the resumption Luton opened their account. Haycock performed the hat trick, and the fourth goal was added by Brown. If this had been the extent of the scoring, the result would have been the same as when the teams met at Luton last season.

But fate decreed otherwise, for in the last two minutes Bauchop headed through as the result of a movement which originated in a free kick for hands by Bob Hawkes. The Luton skipper is rightly looked upon as one of the most gentlemanly players in England, and it is very unusual for him to be pulled up two or three times in one match, as was the case on Saturday.

The score flatters Luton, for although they were the better team, they did not deserve to win by three goals. Still, these home victories make up for some of the hard luck experienced away from home. Luton have only been beaten at home in one Southern League match. The remaining home matches are with Plymouth, Swindon, Exeter, New Brompton, Bristol Rovers, and Southend, all of whom should be beaten.

In the first two or three minutes play was chiefly in favour of the Palace, who had won the toss, and once Gregory kicked out of play when McCurdy was in dire straits. At the other end Haycock received from Stansfield, and, although well marked, put in a shot which hit the post. Then, from a free kick, Brown centred and Menzies headed over. If the ball had been allowed to pass to Stansfield, he should have scored.

Runs by the Palace wingers changed the scene, but neither player caused much alarm. From a throw-in Bauchop seemed likely to get through, but F. Hawkes stopped him, and soon afterwards a nice dropping centre by Woodger was punched out by Platt's deputy. Three centres by Woodger were cleared, and when play returned to midfield Needham received the full force of the ball.

Thus early in the game the duels between Brown and the famous Palace player had become quite a feature. It was unfortunate that the older man was so badly injured as to necessitate his being almost carried off the pitch. He was only off a few minutes, it is true, but he had a similar experience during the second half, and although he continued playing for a time, he retired about ten minutes before the finish.

A miskick by Gregory might have been disastrous to Luton, but the home captain went to his assistance, and the back was able to kick into touch. For some time after this neither set of forwards could get near the custodians, and had to be content with long shots, the best of which was made by Menzies and well saved by Balding. The home centre-forward, by the way, was displaying much more energy than usual.

The first corner of the match fell to the Palace, but Luton were soon attacking, and Haycock might have scored, but he slipped at the last moment. A fine centre by Stansfield was fisted out by Balding. Then the Palace forced two corners, from the second of which Bauchop was unfortunate, hitting the bar with a good shot.

At the other end Menzies tried a long ground shot, and a couple of good attempts were made by F. Hawkes, the second resulting in a corner. Several decisions by the referee had not given entire satisfaction, and once, shortly before the interval, he took an extraordinarily long time to make up his mind about a contravention of the offside rule; indeed, it seemed questionable whether he would have stopped the play but for the shouting of the spectators.

Jones went off about a couple of minutes before half-time, but was not seriously injured, and returned when the teams came on again. The Luton right wing, which had done a lot of work in the first half, was soon moving again, and Brown, after beating Needham, found himself in front of Balding. Brown would have had very little difficulty in sending the ball into the net, but he was pulled up by the referee because Needham had handled. This was another decision which came rather late.

R. Hawkes having cleared right in front of the Luton goal, Luton attacked with some spirit, and Haycock narrowly missed the target on two occasions. Following a throw-in, Jones sent the ball sailing into the mouth of goal. Johnson's shot hit the bar, and Stansfield rushed up, but kicked the sphere into touch. Then the Palace came again, and R. Hawkes conceded a corner in dealing with a shot by Laurence.

Five or ten minutes after the interval Luton scored a goal which the referee allowed, although in the opinion of the great majority of the spectators, Haycock was offside when he obtained possession. From a throw-in the ball was kicked well forward, and Menzies passed to Haycock, who eluded Collyer and shot into the net.

Jarvis saved a centre by Garratt, and Lee shot wide. Stansfield was next prominent with some good play, and Menzies had a good opening, but was robbed. There were cries for a penalty, but they were unheeded by Mr. Rose. Play was quickly transferred to the other end, the Palace forwards going away in a line, but F. Hawkes managed to tip the ball to Jarvis, who cleared just in time.

Then Needham was injured for the second time, the ball in this instance being kicked on to him by Collyer. As on the previous occasion, he had to receive the attention of the trainer and was off the playing pitch some minutes. While he was off, Luton experienced one of those pieces of good fortune which fell to their lot several times during the game. A centre by Garratt looked like finding the net, but McCurdy met it almost on the goal-line and kicked out.

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Rather more than a quarter of an hour from the finish Luton obtained their second goal. When the ball was swung out to Brown, Needham appealed to the referee, saying Luton's outside-right was offside, but Mr. Rose allowed play to continue. Needham rushed into goal, and prevented Haycock from scoring at the first attempt. The inside-right recovered possession, however, and his drive went home.

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Although luck was decidedly against them, the Palace played as well as before, and McCurdy was forced to give a corner. A little later Jarvis had to be very smart to save from Bauchop. Just as Needham was leaving the field for good, Haycock notched a third goal. A centre from Stansfield was headed by Johnson, and went across to Haycock, who did what was necessary.

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The Palace made a warm assault on the Luton goal, and it was marvellous how the ball was kept out. The referee stopped play for a breach of one of the rules, and thus the Luton defence came out of a very tight corner. From a centre by Stansfield, Johnson hit the post, and a long shot from the foot of Menzies was negotiated by Balding, who also kept out good drives from Brown and Haycock.

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Brown was the most prominent player on the field, and it was fitting that he should register one of the points. Receiving from Haycock, he raced away and finished up with a cross shot which found the net, although Balding shot out his arm and touched the ball. This happened about five minutes from the finish, but there was still time for another goal to be scored.

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It was—by the Palace. A free kick was awarded the visitors, R. Hawkes having handled, and the ball went out to Woodger, who put in one of his best centres. Bauchop met it with his head, and Jarvis was beaten for the first time in the three matches in which he has deputised for Platt. This goal was scored in the last two minutes, and no one grudged it to the Palace, who might with a little luck have done much better.

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The injuries to Needham must have had some effect on the side, which did not strike one as being great. No doubt the forwards would have been much smarter if McGibbon had played, and the well-known opportunist would have had some influence on the result. As it was, Luton, although playing very ordinary football, won by a comfortable margin.

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The home left wing was almost starved, but the halves got through their usual amount of work, Jones being quite equal to his two confreres. McCurdy and Gregory were safe; several times they emerged triumphant when it seemed that Jarvis must be left unsupported. Jarvis had not much to do. Woodger, although not in one of his brilliant moods, was as good as any of the Palace forwards.