

FOOTBALL NOTES and NEWS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

BLUES LOSE FIRST HOME MATCH.

Playing against the Crystal Palace on Saturday, Luton lost their first home match of the season, the final score being 4-2 in favour of the Glaziers. All the same, the home side did not deserve to lose by so big a margin, if they deserved to lose at all. For one thing, Luton was severely handicapped, in that three of the first team men were on the injured list. Smith was badly hurt at Griffin Park the week before, in the Cup-tie with Brentford, and he will certainly not be able to take the field again for another week or so. Moody was also unable to turn out, while Jarvis is still unwell. Consequently several changes had to be made in the team. Johnson came in at centre-forward, with Lashbrooke inside left; Fry kept goal. The Palace were, of course, pretty well at full strength.

On the whole, it was a fair game. The Palace men soon found their feet, and early scored, through Young, from a corner. The Luton defence was hard put to soon afterwards to prevent further scoring, both McCurdy and Hedley defending well. Luton next forced a corner, but it came to nothing, though Quinn only just missed with a header. Both sides attacked hotly, and half time was fast approaching when Luton gained a corner, from which Johnson equalised with a goot shot. A few minutes afterwards the same player received the ball from Brown, and scored Luton's second goal with a fine effort. A fierce attack on the part of the Palace followed, but in spite of fine work by Griffin and Payne the home defence prevailed. The teams crossed over with Luton leading by 2 goals to 1.

Resuming, Garrett made a smart run on the Palace wing, but Jones cleared. Stansfield then put in a brilliant run, but shot wide. Quinn next sent in a shot which failed, but soon afterwards he met with a temporary injury, which necessitated the stoppage of the game. Luton attacked strongly, and Lashbrook nearly scored.

The Palace in turn made several attacks, and McCurdy and Hedley each made two good clearances. Griffiths, after a long run of 40 yards, centred to Young, who scored. It was a doubtful point, as Griffiths was well offside when he got the ball. Luton then attacked, and forced two fruitless corners. Two more quickly followed, and Luton made a strong appeal for a penalty, but the referee ignored their protests. Johnson made a brilliant save from a fine shot by Stansfield. There was great excitement towards the close, and Stansfield just missed scoring, the ball only going inches wide. Young scored just before the close, and Payne got the fourth goal for the Palace with a fine shot.

Result: Crystal Palace 4 goals, Luton 2.

There was a very poor attendance at the kick-off, but the terraces began to fill up shortly after the start. A heavy shower fell just as the game commenced, but that did not seriously interfere with the play, and the ground was fairly easy going, considering the state of the weather.

After the Palace had drawn first blood, Luton, with a stiff breeze behind, had practically all the play. The forwards frequently bombarded the Palace goal, and though Johnson is, of course, not a Smith, he made a very good substitute. Some "clinking" shots were sent in, but none seemed to take effect. For quite half-an-hour, Fry had very little to do. At last, however, Luton came into their own, though like the visitors' point, Johnson's goal was rather a soft thing. But his goal which gave the Blues the lead was a brilliant one.

True, a one goal lead wanted some wiping out, but one felt it was not quite a sufficient lead. In the second moiety, the home defence was rather shaky, but for all that the Luton men put up a plucky fight. Young's equaliser was doubtful, as the Palace inside right appeared to be yards offside, though Referee Adams ordered the point to stand. However, this reverse did not in the least dishearten the home men, and they continued to have quite as much of the play as their opponents, and the result looked like being a draw. It was a splendid piece of combination that eventually gave the Londoners the lead. The forwards came down the field like clockwork, and receiving the ball from Garrett, his partner, Young made no mistake. After having done so well, this took the heart out of Luton. The defence literally collapsed, and Payne had no difficulty in finding the net just on the close.

While Smith, Luton's centre, has scored 8 goals this season, Payne, the Palace inside left, has 16 goals to his credit, and shares top position in the Southern League with Shea, of West Ham.