

The Southern League.

LUTON v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

Played at Luton on Saturday. Result:—

Crystal Palace 4 goals.

Luton 2 goals.

Teams:—

Luton—Fry; Hodley and McCurdy; F. Hawkes, Jones, and R. Hawkes; Brown, Quinn, Johnson, Lashbrooke, and Stansfield.

Crystal Palace—Johnson; Collyer and Bulcock; Spottiswood, Clark, and Hughes; Garratt, Young, Williams, Payne, and Griffin.

Referee, Mr. A. Adams (Nottingham)

Luton lost their home record on Saturday, the Palace team being the first to beat the Blues on their own ground this season. It cannot be said that the Glaziers really deserved to win, for they did not play like a team which has headed the table. This may have been due partly to the absence of Woodger, who is generally looked upon as their star artist. Luton, too, were much below par, and never showed anything like the form they displayed in the matches with Queen's Park Rangers and Exeter.

Smith was an absentee owing to the injury received at Brentford, and Moody was suffering from influenza. Johnson took the centre-forward position, and although he performed as well as might have been expected, Smith with his dash was greatly missed. Lashbrooke, who made his first appearance with the premier team at inside-left, was good without being strikingly useful. Another man who is not usually in the first team was Fry, who brought off some clever saves.

The weather was dull and cold, and the four or five thousand spectators did not see an inspiring exhibition. There was not much to choose between the teams, but as Luton were leading by 2 goals to 1 at the interval, it seemed that they might win. They slackened up somewhat in the second half, and the Palace snatched the game out of the fire. The equalising goal should not have been allowed, as it was distinctly offside. This was the worst of several mistakes made by the referee.

Luton won the toss, but were quickly acting on the defensive, and Hedley conceded a corner, from which Young scored after play had been in progress about two minutes. Almost immediately afterwards Fry saved a fine shot from Griffin, and before he could recover himself, McCurdy had kicked out when the ball was going into goal. Any doubts as to whether the ball had crossed the line were, however, set at rest by the fact that one of the Palace forwards was offside. In the succeeding play, which was mostly in favour of the Palace, McCurdy was conspicuous with some good clearances.

On one of Luton's infrequent incursions, Johnson did the right thing in passing out to Brown, whose centre was kicked out of play by one of the Glaziers' defenders. Later on Stansfield tried to meet a long pass forward from Johnson. Collyer prevented him from reaching the ball before it went out of play, but the referee gave a corner which Johnson, the Palace goalkeeper, fisted out. After this Luton made further attempts, but there was a lack of method about the display of the front rank.

On one occasion Brown just reached the ball as it was going out of play, and put across a flying centre. Quinn met it with his head just on the wrong side of the far post. Garratt got away on the right and beat McCurdy for pace. He transferred to Williams, who was given offside. It did not matter much, however, for he placed wide rather weakly. Hedley charged Griffin in what appeared to be a legitimate manner, and the awarding of a free kick did not please the spectators, who also disagreed with the referee's decision in giving Stansfield offside a minute later.

In an attack by the Palace there was much shouting, Williams having handled, but the referee did not blow his whistle, and the other players stood still while Jones cleared. Garratt forced his way across the field, and at last seemed about to shoot when he fell over the ball with Hedley on top of him. Soon afterwards Payne tried a long shot which caused Fry to fling himself at the ball. It was a brilliant save. Johnson was next conspicuous with a good shot, which the other Johnson fisted out. At his next attempt the Luton man shot too high.

But he managed to do the right thing a little later. A corner was taken by Stansfield, and both Johnsons rushed for the ball, which was deflected into the net off the head of the Luton centre-forward. This success was repeated with a really good goal two or three minutes later. Receiving from Brown, Johnson steadied himself, although marked, and scored with a rather high oblique shot. The Palace lost no time in attacking, and McCurdy sustained a slight injury to his head.

A hot attack on the Luton goal having been repelled, Griffin made a good run, and from McCurdy's clearance Payne obtained possession. His shot went over. Williams kicked straight on to the target, and Fry fisted out. Payne was close up and put wide—a very near thing. Another run by the auburn-headed Williams threatened danger, and he was tackled by both the home backs, who fell. They stopped him, however, and Bob Hawkes had an easy task in clearing.

Luton were able to start the second half with a lead of 2 goals to 1, and quickly forced a corner, which Quinn headed over. At the other end McCurdy ducked his head as the ball was going out of play, and the referee gave a corner. The Luton players appealed against the decision, and as Williams agreed that McCurdy did not touch the ball, the referee altered his award.

Quinn had the misfortune to collide with the fence in front of the grand stand, and play was stopped for a short period in consequence. From the throw-down, the Palace backs were over-run, and Lashbrooke rushed in as Johnson picked up the ball and cleared. From a free kick the Glaziers' forwards got very dangerous, and Jones gave a corner which was cleared. Griffin displayed considerable smartness in beating F. Hawkes and Jones, and then sending in a long shot which was

only a trifle too high; indeed, Griffin himself did not know whether Fry had touched the ball.

The Palace scored the equalising goal in a rather lucky fashion. Luton had been attacking, and following a throw-in the ball was sent down the field. Griffin was some yards over the half-way line when the ball was swung across, and he was certainly offside. He was allowed to go on, however, and Young headed through from his centre. The Luton players appealed, but the referee seemed to have no doubt about the legality of the point.

Brown put across a good centre, which Lashbrooke met to such good purpose that Johnson gave a corner. This was followed by another. Then Garratt broke away, and Fry saved Williams' header just as the whistle was going for offside. This time the referee was right, but he might have made up his mind sooner. Two more corners for Luton were taken by Stansfield, and the second produced a very warm attack.

A really smart shot by Quinn might have caught some goalkeepers unawares, but Johnson met it in a manner worthy of the occasion. The ball went out to Stansfield, whose shot went off a defender. There appeared to be some doubt as to whether the shot had been diverted in a legitimate manner, and the Luton players appealed for a penalty, but only a corner was given. This was cleared, but shortly afterwards Stansfield, after working well in, tried a fast shot which travelled by the upright.

Play was stopped for a minute owing to an injury to the Luton centre-forward's head. Almost immediately the Palace forwards got away in a line, and Young converted Garratt's centre. This happened a quarter of an hour from the end, and it was quickly followed by another. Two of the Palace forwards dashed through, and Payne's shot went into the net off the upright.

Then the game was practically over, and the supporters of the visiting team did not forget to shout. Some of them had come from London and others had travelled from Hitchin, being specially interested in the display of Payne, who is a Hertfordshire man. The match was really won through the alertness of the Palace forwards, who kept it up to the end and were always more dangerous than the other quintette.

It is an undeniable fact that the Luton team as a whole did not settle down to their usual game. Occasionally Johnson would send out a nice swinging pass to the wing, and he was a genuine trier. The right wing was in good fettle. Lashbrooke, although he made a creditable debut, never held the ball long enough to draw the defence, being content to simply pass it. The halves were hardly so good as usual, and at back Hedley was not at his best, nor was he too scrupulous in his methods. Fry saved several good shots, but clearing is not his strong point.