

FOOTBALL NOTES and NEWS

SOUTHERN LEAGUE.

LUTON'S VICTORY AT THE "PALACE"

On Saturday, at Sydenham, Luton Town administered a crushing defeat to the Crystal Palace, the Blues in the end winning by 3 goals to one. Naturally the chances of the "Glaziers" were very much fancied, and playing on their own pitch the odds were certainly on their winning. Still the Palace are not quite the side they have been, while of late Luton have been playing better than at any time during the season.

Evidently the Palace realised this, too, for they put their strongest team in the field. Bulcock and Woodger, who have been absent from the Palace ranks for some time, returned, and thus the home side was materially strengthened.

But it was all of no avail. The Blues settled down at the start, and soon had their opponents hemmed in. The Palace were taken by surprise—not only were they not able to do anything of an aggressive nature, but the backs had as much as they could do to defend their charge.

The Luton forwards were very active, but their first goal came from the half-line, Fred Hawkes finding the net with a lightning shot 20 minutes from the start. The right-half generally finds the net once or twice in a season, and evidently realising that April 30th is near at hand he made up his mind to maintain his reputation. Be that as it may, Freddy's terrific drive from a 30 yards range gave the Palace custodian no chance to negotiate the shot.

After this the Palace realised that they had an up hill battle to fight, but for all that the men never seemed to settle down. Williams, however, succeeded in equalising, but it was the result more of luck than judgment.

But the Blues were not to be denied, and they again commenced to force the game. Brown neatly tricked Bulcock, and passing to Smith, the Luton centre-forward gave his side once more the lead with a brilliant shot. Thus at the interval the visitors had the lead of one goal in three.

In the second moiety Jarvis, who had almost been a passenger in the first half, was tested on several occasions, but he managed to keep his citadel intact. Play for a considerable time was inclined to be more even, and nothing of a tangible nature happened until half-an-hour from the re-start. Then it was that Quinn took a pot shot, and had the satisfaction of seeing the leather curl into the corner of the net.

This certainly placed the issue beyond all doubt. During the remainder of play, the Glaziers practically contented themselves with keeping their opponents out. Luton, too, appeared to be resting on their laurels, for they never afterwards put much heart into their work. As nothing further was scored, Luton won 3-1.

Their defeat came as a great disappointment to the Palace, but for all that it was by no means a lucky win for Luton. It must be admitted that the Blues won on their merits. The visiting defence was weak enough, Chapman being particularly unreliable. But the Luton backs were able to rely on a strong half-line, while so far as the Palace was concerned, it was virtually the weakness of the half-backs that "let them down." Neither were the forwards very aggressive; they scarcely ever found their feet, and were thus all the more easily held in check by the visitors.

Luton are still in the 15th position from the top, despite their series of recent wins, the explanation being that teams above them in the League have been doing the same thing. For their 39 matches Luton have 38 points placed to their credit. There are three more matches to play—Brighton and Portsmouth at home, and West Ham away.

It may not be generally noticed that Luton have one record. They have scored 69 goals, and have had 89 scored against them, making a total of 158. No team even in the League can beat this record. So far as the Southern League is concerned there are only two teams who have scored more goals than Luton—Northampton 85, and Swindon 81. On the other hand there is only one team who have had more goals scored against them—Croydon Common with 90; Southend comes the next with 87.

Reading have for a long time been candidates for relegation, and the only question is who will accompany them. Croydon Common look like going down along with the Biscuit team, but Southend, though two points in hand are none too safe in view of their three remaining engagements. Brighton are champions already, no matter what happens. Should Swindon and Queen's Park succeed in winning their next six matches they will scarcely be able to catch the leaders on points.

On the Luton enclosure on Saturday afternoon, the Reserves met Crystal Palace Reserves. There was a moderate gate, and a fair display was witnessed. The game certainly did not lack for vigor. Both sides were well matched, and a draw of one goal each was about as much as the locals could have expected.