

A POINT LOST AT HOME.

Crystal Palace Share Two Goals in A Poor Game.

A New Amateur Forward.

By "Vigilant."

The Good Friday result at Plymouth was not exactly calculated to improve the "gate" prospects for the first home match of the Easter programme, but, happily for the Directors, there were counteracting influences, which, after all, had the effect of making the attendance quite satisfactory. To begin with, the visitors were Crystal Palace, one of the top "sawyers," and always a favourite team at Luton, then the Blues had out another new player on trial, and, lastly, Saturday afternoon was a really brilliant one from the weather standpoint. Still, there were not 6,000 people present, and I imagine those who stood out in the open derived more pleasure from the glorious sun bath they had than the football they witnessed, for, generally speaking, it was a disappointing game. Both teams tried hard enough, but the hard ground, a lively ball, and a very troublesome cross wind, prevented either of them bringing out their best form. The result was a draw, and although the Blues had bad luck, in more senses than one, it cannot be said that, as the game went, the score was anything but a correct record.

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The Glaziers brought their full team, for they finish their League programme to-day, and, though they cannot hope to be champions, they are very keen on being runners-up—so keen that bonuses have been promised the players. The Blues were without Bob Hawkes, who, for a change, took a holiday jaunt to the west country for the Good Friday game, and came back feeling sufficiently stiff to require a rest. Johnson took his place, and in the forward line Lashbrooke was displaced by a Northern amateur named George West, who is down for a trial, presumably with a view to being signed on. He plays for a Tyneside League Club, and, although he is not the player the Luton officials were expecting to have assisting, it was thought the experiment was one worth making, seeing that the club are terribly short for forwards, with Moody hors de combat, and their position in the League table cannot be endangered.

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Mr. R. P. Dommett, of Portsmouth, was the referee, and the teams under him were:—

Luton.—Naisby; Wightman and Potts; F. Hawkes, Bushell, and Johnson; Brown, Walker, Stephenson, G. West, and Stansfield.

Palace.—Johnson; Collyer and Bulcock; Collins, Hughes and Hanger; Garratt, Hewitt, Williams, Woodhouse and Davies.

Winning the toss, Fred Hawkes set the visitors to face the sun and a very nasty cross wind, and it was some time before the play quickened to some extent. The forwards could not get the ball properly under control, and the defenders had it all their own way. In the first five minutes Wightman did more brilliant things than all the other twenty-one players put together, kicking and tackling with fine resolution, and perfect accuracy. Thrice he stopped the Palace left wing in quick succession, and at the other end Brown was outwitted by Bulcock with consummate cleverness. Stansfield met one of Wightman's huge punts close into goal, and it was not without some suspicion that the ball was got out of harm's way by the backs, but it fell to the new amateur to make the first call on either of the goalkeepers. He headed in from a pass by Bushell, but Johnson was quite equal to it.

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The first really clever piece of attacking play was between Johnson and Stansfield. Making good use of a gem of a pass from his half, Harold centred in fine style. Stephenson tried to bring off a coup with a half volley as the centre came towards him, but he got hold of it at the wrong angle, and was yards out. Ernie Brown greatly pleased the spectators by the resource with which he forced his way down the wing, quite single-handed. But he never really had the ball under control, and his final effort passed behind. Stephenson sent Stansfield off with a beautifully accurate pass, and there was some excitement when Bulcock lifted Harold's centre high up in the goal mouth. West smartly smothered the ball as it fell, and slipped by one of the two opponents he had to beat, but failed at the next hurdle.

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What attacking was being done was nearly all in favour of Luton, though it is only fair to say that the Palace defence never wavered. Bushell and Johnson were backing their forwards with heaps of clever work. The former had an unsuccessful aim for the goal, and Joe enabled Stansfield to force a corner, from which Potts landed in the goal mouth, and West, with a header, once more called upon the Palace custodian. All these efforts, however, paled into insignificance compared with one by Bushell, which Johnson was glad enough to get round the post. It was a brilliant shot—perhaps the shot of the game—and fully justified the centre half's reputation as a

marksman. He had another go from the corner, but this time it was a daisy cutter, and there were plenty of feet about the goal mouth to prevent it troubling the custodian. Two other shots similar in type were rained in by West and Johnson, and they shared the same fate.

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All this time a Palace "scribe" on my left had been sucking his pencil, wondering when there was going to be a Palace attack for him to chronicle. When they did get going, as he enthusiastically put it, it could hardly be called an attack, although Naisby had not quite a soft time of it. The ball was punted up from the halves at such a height that two forwards were on Naisby directly he grasped the bouncing armful of leather. To attempt to clear was impossible, and so he tenaciously held on and was charged over the goal-line. But the referee did not notice, and so instead of throwing the ball to the corner flag, as he quite expected he would have to do, Tommy landed it into touch. Very quickly the Blues were off again, and a promising run on the right was checked by a foul on Walker. Johnson's free kick was a beauty, and his namesake had trouble with it, for Bulcock almost unsighted him. Still, he got it away down the field, and he seemed a bit astonished when he returned just in time to find that Wightman had returned it with unerring aim.

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The Palace defence were having a heavy time of it, but at last Johnson allowed the right wing to get on the move. Hewitt got in a terrific drive, which rebounded off one of the backs. Hanger seized on the rebound and passed to Davies, who was just wide of the mark with a smart screw shot. Naisby had another good shot to deal with high up in the goal, and after this we had a great deal of midfield play, with plenty of long kicking by the backs and very little attacking work of any note. When the Palace did get near the Luton goal things looked a bit black for the Blues because Davies was allowed to take up a pass when he was close in goal and obviously in an offside position. Quite unmarked, he centred in the goalmouth and no one would have been surprised if a penalty had been awarded against Wightman, for the ball came awkwardly for him, and one of his hands came into play in making his clearance. But he had his back to the referee and consequently the Blues escaped. A minute passed and then they had another let off. Davies again caused the danger with a centre, and Williams left it for Hewitt, who had an open goal and shot from quite an unexpected quarter. Fred Hawkes, however, managed to get in the way, and though Garratt caught the rebound, his effort was wide.

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It was now Luton's turn, and a fine run on the right and a lively centre by Brown saw the ball speed across the goal and Stephenson completely miss a fine chance. Stansfield took the centre and again landed the ball in the goalmouth, and this time Stephenson caused Johnson to save. The chance of the half, however, fell to Brown. Walker took a pass from the left wing and turning it over to his partner gave him a clear opening. The outside right was straight for goal and he had plenty of time to steady, and Ernie seemed as if he could have kicked himself when he shot well wide of the mark. Bushell, West and Stansfield were associated in a particularly clever bout of passing, but nothing came of it.

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This was almost the last the Luton attack saw of the game in the first half, for about five minutes from half-time Bushell, who had earlier received attention from Trainer Lawson, had to leave the field, and with their ranks shortened the Blues seemed all at sea. For a few minutes the home