

CROYDON COMMON v. LUTON.

Played at Selhurst on Saturday. Result:—

Croydon Common	4 goals.
Luton	2 goals.

The teams were as follow:—

Luton — Abbott; Henderson and Potts; F. Hawkes, Wilson, and R. Hawkes; Stephenson, Wileman, M. Price, Smith, and Worth.

Croydon Common—Newton; Little and Hutchins; Yenson, Bushell, and Pace; Chester, Ailman, Page, Upex, and Barnfather

Referee, Mr. J. Talks, Lincoln.

Luton made their third appearance of the season at the Nest, Selhurst, on Saturday, and although they did better in the scoring line than on the occasion of the two previous visits, the Robins also added to their earlier scores, and thus came out victors once more. It is certainly curious that both clubs have managed to add one goal to their previous total on each occasion since the Cup-tie, when it will be remembered the score stood 2-0 in favour of the home club. Apparently Croydon have now settled upon their best combination, for with the exception of the goalkeeper, they played the exact team which won the Southern Alliance points three weeks ago. On the other hand, Luton had no fewer than eight positions differently filled than was the case in the match in question, although only four different players were actually introduced into the team.

Of these, the only one making his first appearance was an amateur, M. Price, who hails from Sheffield district, and was introduced to the notice of the Directors by a member of the Supporters' Club committee. He was given the post of centre-forward on his reputation as a goal-scorer in his own class, but unfortunately he failed to find the target on Saturday. Thompson was unable to play on account of an injury sustained against Swansea, but Wileman, who also got in the wars in the same match, was able to resume, and took his original position at inside-right.

On arrival at St. Pancras the outlook was all against any match being played in the Metropolitan area, as it was as dark as midnight, and inquiries were made over the 'phone as to the possibility of the game being played, but it was soon discovered that the fog did not reach to Selhurst, although it was very misty and uncomfortable on account of the drizzling rain. The home officials were bemoaning the fact that this would prevent their prospect of taking a record gate. As it was, there would be over 3,000 spectators, but this was far below the expected number.

When the players took the field together with the referee, the crowd were highly amused, this being the first time the majority had set eyes upon Mr Talks, who was in charge of the game, and as he is barely 4 ft. 9½ ins. it will be understood he does present a comical appearance when the two captains toss up with such a little fellow as referee. It should be recorded, however, that Mr. Talks, although so insignificant in size, is by no means an official to be overlooked, and as the game progressed he soon gave evidence he was to be an important factor in the game. He gives his decisions very promptly, and, judging by Saturday, is rather inclined to overdo the whistle business and award fouls for technical offences. Anyway, the players were never allowed to get out of hand and the play was never rough.

Croydon were the first to get dangerous, but Abbott was equal to all the shots which came to hand during the opening five minutes or so. Then, as is so often the case, almost the first time the side which has been defending get down the field they manage to score a goal, and this happened on Saturday. The ball was finely placed out to Worth by Bob Hawkes for the outside left to get away, and Little at once realised the danger and attempted to stop the movement by a foul, which the referee at once saw and awarded a free kick about forty yards out. The ball was dropped into the centre of the field, and Wileman, with a first time drive, sent it clean through the defence into the net before Newton had realised that his charge was endangered.

This was good business for Luton, and it was hoped by the few Lutonians present at the match that the good fortune would be followed up, but unfortunately this was not the case. For it was soon evident the Robins were likely to equalise, for they put more method into their work, and it was no surprise to find them on level terms once more when the game was only sixteen minutes old. The equalising point was netted by Chester, who dashed up and met a cross-drive from Upex, and scored from an acute angle. At this stage there was much speculation as to how long the game would continue, for the light was very bad, and it was almost impossible to follow the ball on the opposite side of the ground, and the general opinion on the grand stand was that

it mattered very little who was leading, for the game could not possibly run the full time.

Ten minutes before the interval, Upex, who was playing a forceful game, sent the ball well into the goal-mouth. Abbott managed to stop it going through for the moment, but Page coming up at the same time was presented with the easiest of chances, and gave his side the lead from close range. This proved to be all the scoring up to half-time, and the players retired with the score 2-1 in favour of Croydon.

The referee was quickly back on the field and whistled the players from the dressing-room, it being his evident intention to finish the game if at all possible. Luton were the last to come out, and the spectators were rather sarcastic in their remarks as they filed through the enclosure. All doubt as to the final result was soon dispelled, for very soon after the re-start two further goals were added to the Croydon score. Potts was largely responsible for the first of the goals, for he missed the ball altogether, and Chester had a clear run into goal. Abbott, however, managed to prevent his netting at the first attempt, but did not clear, and finally dropped the ball a yard or so wide of his charge, and Chester after all had the satisfaction of adding to his total. The fourth goal scored by Croydon was the prettiest of the day, and was well worked for by the whole of the home vanguard, the ball being passed from one to the other in fine style. Finally Allman found himself with a chance for a pop at goal, and he made no mistake with a clean cross drive. For a time it appeared likely that the Robins would add more goals, but gradually they appeared to tire, and Luton had a greater share of the exchanges. Indeed, during the final ten minutes it was seldom the ball was in the Luton half of the field at all.

The light was now very bad, and when Luton scored it was only the fact that the players lined up to re-start the game from the centre that many of the spectators were aware a goal had been scored. Even from the centre of the ground it was impossible to say who scored, and the Press representatives were compelled to visit the Luton dressing-room at the finish of the game to discover who was the actual scorer. It appears Stephenson dropped across a centre which Newton fumbled, and the ball coming to Bob Hawkes, the Luton captain had simply to tap it through and thus reduce the margin. Although there were quite five minutes left to play, nothing of interest took place, Luton keeping the ball in Croydon quarters without being able to break down the defence.

The result in no way flattered the Robins, who were much the smarter side all through. The new Luton centre did not prove the mascot the directors are seeking. He was possibly not in the best condition, having done little training, and although at the time of writing it is not known if he will turn out against Ton Pentre, he stated he would go into regular training during the present week with a view to a thorough trial this week-end. He is ideally built for a centre-forward, and if he develops with further acquaintance, should prove a big help in forcing the game.

On Saturday, Wileman was undoubtedly Luton's best forward, and he seemed quite to relish being able to take his original position, for he gave a finished display at inside-right. But the other members of the attack were very moderate; indeed, the only other player to threaten danger was R. Hawkes, playing at left-half. These two players stood out quite above their comrades, although Wilson worked tremendously hard, particularly in defence.

The Croydon officials stated after the match that if they had been able to play their present team at the commencement of the season, they would have been certain of promotion, and in this they are probably right, for they have got a very serviceable side now. Their most brilliant forward was Chester, but the whole line were a workman-like combination, and in Upex they have a very forceful player, who feeds Barnfather with good effect. Hutchins has been out of the team for a week or two, and was a doubtful starter on Saturday but he gave little evidence of unfitness; indeed, the halves and backs were never really overpowered.