

WHY THE PALACE WON.

Luton Town Again Fail Away.

(By "CRUSADER.")

Luton Town again disappointed their supporters last Saturday when they fell to Crystal Palace at Selhurst by three goals clear. Undoubtedly they were meeting the most improved team in the League, and this was the fourth consecutive victory of the Palace, who have gone well up the League in consequence, but the result was due chiefly to the very poor display the Town gave in the first half.

In this period the goals were scored by CHERRETT, GREENER, CHERRETT, in that order, and every goal was well deserved. The Palace played with strength and determination in all departments, were quick to seize a chance, sharp on an opponent in possession, and equally quick on the ball when they got the opportunity. Each goal was the reward of dash and enterprise, qualities that were lacking from the Town side.

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Playing against the breeze in the first half, the Town did fairly well in the opening, but the Palace began to use their weight well, and by vigorous, though not unfair tactics, they beat back the Town halves and backs. Purdy made several good saves before he was beaten for the first time, the Palace centre-forward taking a pass that came somewhat awkwardly to his right foot and shooting a splendid goal.

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After this tonic the Palace had much the better of the exchanges, and but for the fine defence of Graham, Till and Purdy, they would have had several goals. They were a trifle fortunate to get the second goal. Rennie pushed Cherrett away as the latter backed into him, a tame sort of warding-off, but it was a clear case, and the referee had no option. Curiously enough, if Rennie had charged, it would not have been an offence, for Cherrett was intentionally obstructing and was facing his own goal.

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The free kick was taken, and looked to be safely disposed of when the ball was kicked hard to the right of the goal, well away. Greener, however, fastened upon it and shot hard and true, and the ball found a direct course among a crowd of players and entered the net to the right of Purdy, who had no chance. It was a speculation that seldom succeeds, though it deserves to do so.

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The third goal came just before the interval, when Greener, who was very active, swung the ball right across goal, and again the Palace centre-forward was too quick for the opposition, and he scored with a grand header, Purdy again having no chance. There had been some good movements by the Town forwards at times, but they finished badly. Thrice Moffat was sent clear away, but each time he was beaten by the lively ball, and on two occasions the Palace had to pack their goal to stave off disaster. They did it well.

The success of the Palace in the first half was due very largely to their hefty kicking and speedy following up, and whenever the Town defenders went for the ball they invariably had to deal with an opponent. On the other hand, the Palace defenders were usually so positioned that they had not a lot of difficulty in clearing. There was another tale in the second half, but the damage had been done.

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After a preliminary attack by the Palace the Town copied the methods of the Palace with more success, and the balance of play for long periods was with the Town, though it was very slight, and whenever the Palace attacked they were more incisive, shot better, and generally managed to crowd a full attack into the goal-area. The Town's inside wingers were so busy helping the halves that most of the efforts within range came from Jim Thompson or his wingers, and so the Palace backs were not often unduly pressed.

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Practically the only shooting worthy the name came from Jim Thompson. Twice Callender made brilliant saves from the Town centre-forward, but most of his work was from long range and he dealt with the shots that came his way without any trouble. On the other hand Purdy was never given much time, and he made two or three marvellous saves when the Palace seemed certain to score.

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The Town defence could not be blamed for the reverse. The main weakness was in the middle line before the interval. Afterwards all three improved, but the lively character of the Palace attack in the first half had been too much for them, and they gave little assistance to the forwards though getting a good deal of help from Norman Thomson and Agnew. It is a moot point whether the two inside forwards would not have done better had they left the middle men to do their own job, and concentrated upon maintaining their own functions of attack.

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Purdy played finely throughout, and Till was the grandest back on view. Most of his work bore the stamp of the master, and he won volumes of praise. Graham also put up a splendid defence in spite of a collision early on that caused his temporary retirement. The halves have been referred to above. Millar was the pick. Jim Thompson strove hard to rally his attack, which was disconnected and ragged, but he was slow in getting away. Dennis was not so prominent as usual, and Moffat also suffered through lack of support.

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Norman Thomson and Agnew worked hard, often skilfully, but they were frequently misplaced, and there was not sufficient punch in the final efforts when at close quarters. Undoubtedly the changed conditions did not make for the Town's best. Hard ground and light ball are not to their liking, and they did not adapt themselves to the change.

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The Palace have a much better side than their League position indicates. They were a fine, well-balanced side; sturdy, vigorous, and skilful in attack and defence. Callender, Coyle, Greener and Cherrett were the most conspicuous.

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CRYSTAL PALACE	3
LUTON TOWN	0

PALACE.—Callender: Little. Cross: Hamilton, Coyle, Greener: Harry, Blake-more, Cherrett, Hawkins, Clarke.

LUTON.—Purdy: Graham, Till: Neal, Bennie, Millar: Moffat, Thomson, Thompson, Agnew, Dennis.