

PANTHER'S PLAY

(By "CRUSADER.")

It is recorded that in the early days of football Lord Kinnaird and C. M. Alcock, who were destined to hold the highest offices of the Football Association, were once captains of opposing sides. Just before the game Alcock asked Kinnaird if kicking were to be permitted. "By all means," Kinnaird is said to have answered.

That was before football became a profession; when laws were not laid down with such emphasis as to-day when there was no two-guinea or three-guinea fee for a referee and a guinea for a referee-deputy.

Even allowing that hacking was a most undesirable thing even in those days, I am certain that the games could not have been more brutal than those in which Luton Town have taken part this holiday, and the amazing thing about it is that men who rely upon soundness of limb for their livelihood had not the slightest respect for either the laws of the game or dictated by the F.A., or the elementary principles of sportsmanship.

I am bound to say that, speaking generally, there have been teams during the post-war years that could teach the winning of points the true spirit of sport, though in every season we have come up against many clubs that deemed a side that played a more sporting game, no matter how it might be done. This season, however, we have not yet seen who showed respect for the attitude of week during the last two or three months we have had opponents.

For some time I have considered how long it would be before opponents were found who would take mean advantage of this feature of the Town's play. By the irony of things it came in the season of goodwill, for on Christmas Day Millwall Athletic could not take defeat as sportsmen should, and several of their players, who on Christmas meant tricks not conceived. In spite of that we saw skill triumph over brute force, largely because the official insisted upon liberal interpretation of the rules. Alas! The same official could not take the return kick at New Cross any qualification of fairness at all. There were exceptions, but the others provided the defeat, right or not, since Millwall were at Luton last season.

Kicking, hacking, brutal charging, kneeing, elbows banging, and in two cases blows—such as the so-called "pistol" blow on the back of the head—were not infrequently resorted to. There were exceptions, but the others provided the dirtiest play we have seen.

It is true that some of the Touch players retaliated, and while I do not agree that they were right in doing so, I will not pillory men under the circumstances. In thirty years' experience of serious football I have never seen a team suffer to the extent that Luton has suffered this holiday and take it so meekly.

When Richards was knocked out at Northampton—the first time in his career—scores of the home supporters applied and urged their players to do it again. Why? Because earlier on Richards and Watson kicked at the ball together, and the latter just managed to forestall the Luton player. The result was that a ligament of the foot was torn. Richards helped to pick up Watson, and was sympathetic, but that did not help him.

When returning from Northampton one of the Luton players said, "If one of us happens to play a bit rough at Luton our crowd start cheering the other side, and shout for the offender to be turned off; other crowds, when one of us is injured, tell their players to do it again." That was the experience both at New Cross and Northampton, and it was a disgrace to the name of sport. One hears a good deal about the behaviour and the calousness of followers of boxing, but at two boxing matches at Luton this last two or three months I can honestly say that the crowds showed more sportsmanship among the two or three hundred lookers-on than was shown by the 30,000 Millers' ton football followers, some of whom were as sympathetic, but that did not weigh with either the home players or a section

In closing this foreword of the holiday games, I hope that the Town players will not allow their experiences to interfere with their purpose to play the game as it should be played, and as they have lately been playing, and that the behaviour of players who would rather cripple opponents than, lose the match, then the vice versa, will be taken the better for it.

At Interior State:

LUTON on Christmas Day:—
LUTON TOWN 6
MILLWALL ATHLETIC 0
LUTON—Harper; Graham, Till; Black,
 Cumie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Reid,
 Woods, Thompson.
MILLWALL—Lansdale; Fort, Hill; Amos,
 I. Bryant, Graham; Chance, Moule,
 Barker, Phillips, Gore.

Of the match on Christmas Day it may be said that the play of the Town was a revelation. They were masters throughout the game that was just as clever as the "Gloves" wanted it to be, for they had resort to unfair tactics on many occasions because they could not cope with the speed and skill of the Town forwards and strikers. It is not to be overlooked that Graham and I, but it must be said that the understanding between ourselves and forwards was the most potent factor in the Town's success. It was remarkable how accurate the passes ran and generally to the player most convenient for attack. Harry Woods has been playing for fifteen years and has been mentioned in these columns that he has been a star in the game, but there was no such fault of speed, but there was no such fault of this game, and all the forwards played with a dash, skill, and coolness that was

BLACK had the privilege of opening the scoring after a brilliant run through at the end of 20 minutes, though Norman Morgan lit the upright before then, and there was an appeal for a goal. However, the second goal when he was stamped home a strike from a long range, and REID scored the third goal on receiving from Black. The second half was even more in favour of the Town, and there were times when they toyed with the opposition. It was a case of inferior defence to balance an unselfish, playfully brilliant combination. One of these spells of passing enabled REID to score the fourth goal from Wood's pass, and then an effective push through the middle by Rennie gave REID through the net. A brilliant, cleverly executed kick by Thomson enabled WOODS

Apart from two fine efforts by Parker in each half, and a glorious opportunity missed by the same player just before the end, the "Lions" forwards had a poor day. There was injured early on, and left the field eventually, his knee being damaged. Allowing for that, however, it was the breakdown of the "Lions" middle which enabled the Town to win in such handsome fashion, and the play which was a revelation to the visiting supporters, at least as far as the "Lions" team.

Millwall Athletic's defence has not had as many goals registered against it since February, 1922, when Queen's Park Rangers won 6-1. The 6-0 defeat inflicted by the team on Christmas Day was the heaviest sustained by the "Lions" since the war, and amply avenged the 7-1 defeat the previous season.

The last time the Town scored six goals in a League game was on March 14th, 1925, when they defeated Moulton Town by 6-0.

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At New Cross on Monday:-

MILLWALL ATHLETIC	7
LUTON TOWN	0

MILLWALL-Lansdale; Port, Hill; Amos, V. E. Bryant, Graham; Chance, Gomm, Parker, Phillips, Black.

LUTON-Harper; Graham, Till; Black, Lennie, Millar; Poulton, Thomson, Reid, Woods, Thompson.

At New Cross on Monday the game was not a few minutes old when Reid and Black had been badly fouled, and the Lions* were playing in such a manner that it was clear that they intended to win somehow. Several of the Town players had suffered hard and unfair blows before Amos opened the scoring with a fine goal, and very soon afterwards, following a corner, the Town made the 2-0 lead. Then, in the Town's charge in the Luton goal-area, PHILLIPS rushed the ball through. Reid was assisted in the field, and the Town players were then more than a match for the Lions when in getting goals. GOMM and PARKER added goals before the interval, which

Five minutes after the re-start PARKER of the fifth goal, and with conditions still unchanged so far as the tactics of the game were concerned, GOMM got the sixth, and just before the close PHILLIPS scored the seventh.

Stewart Littlewood led the Port Vale at
femerton on Saturday, and was respon-
sible for both goals which enabled the
"Villans" to win. In each case a de-
fender kicked the ball on to Littlewood,
and it rebounded into the net. The ex-
tension player was praised for his leader-

THE LEAGUE: DIVISION III. (South).									
	P	W	L	T	D	F	A	P	Goals
	2	15	4	2	4	3	54	4	
Windsor Town	21	15	2	1	2	3	54	4	
Brighton & Hove	19	13	2	2	4	45	19	2	
Crystal Palace	20	12	3	6	5	53	29	2	
Wid. Albion	22	11	6	5	47	32	37	2	
Newport Arkley	21	10	5	6	40	34	23	2	
Sewport County	21	11	7	3	26	31	25	2	
UTON TOWN	20	9	6	5	36	34	23	2	
Gr. Brentford	19	9	6	4	44	30	22	2	
Donhead Utd.	20	10	8	2	41	35	22	2	
Exeter City	20	8	4	40	32	20	16	2	
Crystal Palace	19	7	7	5	34	32	17	2	
Watford	20	9	6	5	36	26	19	2	
Northwich City	20	7	9	6	36	16	19	2	
Merthyr Town	20	7	10	3	30	13	17	2	
Swansea Town	19	6	8	5	32	26	16	2	
Crystal Rovers	21	6	10	5	30	16	17	2	
Swansea Pk. R.	21	6	12	3	36	50	17	2	
Swansea City	21	7	13	1	30	52	15	2	
Gillingham	20	6	11	4	25	35	14	2	
Charlton Athletic	18	5	9	4	23	30	14	2	
Northampton	22	5	13	4	30	47	14	2	

At Northampton on Tuesday:—

NORTHAMPTON TOWN	2
LUTON TOWN	1

NORTHAMPTON. — Hammond, Watson, Jeffs; Allon, Maloney, Hoten; H. Jones, Robinson, Brett, Cocker, Shaw.

LUTON. — Harper; Graham, Till; Black, Tennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Richards, Woods, Clark.

Referee: W. E. Greenland, London.

There was a magnificent following for the visitors, for crowds came by excursion train, charabanc, and car, and Luton got a warm reception when they turned out. They had two changes, Richards taking the centre-forward berth vice the injured Field, and Clark coming in for Jim Thompson at outside-left. Useful to Treadwell sustaining a broken leg on Monday when playing against Brighton and Hove Albion, Robinson was brought into the home team.

In the first half there was a considerable disparity between the teams. Luton had decidedly the better of the exchanges, pressing for long periods, and Richards showed characteristic enterprise in his new position. He was always foraging for a possession, and once tested Hammond with a

An appeal for a penalty-kick was made against Black when he was alleged to have fouled the referee. The referee, however, overruled the appeal, and the other end Richards was tripped by Jeff in glaring fashion a few yards from goal, and the referee again ignored the appeal. Just in time Black tore up into his own goal when Cooke had scored, and the Luton half-back just managed to kick the ball off his opponent's toe. This was the prelude to a strong attack by the visitors, but Hammond and Richards were safe, and the referee twice made a mistake in allowing the other end a spell of midfield play followed, and then Luton attacked hotly, the ball being banged in

Eventually Jeffs headed away, and before he bail touched the ground WOODS met it, and from 20 yards' range scored a lovely goal. Just afterwards the latter's right wing was plied by Richards, and Poynton sent in a nice centre for Richards to top the bar with a header. Hotten was playing good football at this time, his initiation being very fine, and most of the home team's raids came from his

In stopping a thrust by Richards, Watson was hurt and had to be carried off, and Sutton put up a series of strong attacks. Woods was the first to be hit, and then Hammond and was off temporarily. Woods was shot with great power and tested Hammond, while the same player and Thomson sent just too high. Richards then got clean through, and the player was hit. The play had been getting rougher and there were many free- kicks, the Auburn side getting by far the bigger number, but they could not use them to a advantage, though Richards once put a kick with a neat header from Black's free-kick, but the Auburn defense deservingly by a

Brett went to his proper position as full back when the game was resumed, and it was soon evident that the ten home players were intent upon levelling the scores somehow. There were fierce rushes in which man and ball were taken together, or, if the ball could not be captured, the man was not missed. Only two minutes had elapsed when the home team got a corner. Woods tried to collect the

shot. Harper saved on the line, but was promptly tackled, and SHAW kicked the ball out of his hands. The referee, Lutz, did not show the determined resistance that was expected, and with the "Cobblers" playing anyhow, men became clean out of position, but working hard, all sides of the field. The game was full of plenty of excitement and an extraordinary number of free-kicks. Robinson was pulled up time after time, and Hotten also came in for a number of rough plays and fouls and infractions. The play was so scrappy as could be imagined, but Lutz was going to pieces against the fierce assaults of the home side. The attack by Lutz and his fellows on the ball was dash to the other end, a corner was won and this produced a scramble in the Town goal. Harper punched the ball back of the net, and the referee, Lutz, thought that he could resume his feet. Shaw had returned the ball, and Hotten and two or three other players were under the ball. Millar was bunched over on his face and his head was headed into the net.

Richards and Millar changed places, the latter having been badly knocked about by Robinson, and in a later raid Millar was pushed out of the way as Woods put the ball through to him well in front of

So came the end, and most of the 2,000 spectators were glad.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the match at Northampton was the display of Hotten at half. That he has found his right place is obvious, and the on-lookers were in that he was not a footballer. I have always had a liking for Hotten of the field and an admiration for what he can do. Robus on it when he played the game. Robus play need not necessarily include such a player as a marvellous Hotten's otherwise fine play, his cleverness in construction being a feature of the "colours" game.

The Town fell away in the second half and the battering they sustained at New Cross, apart from the heavy game played by the "Cobblers," had left its mark. They played as well as they were allowed to.

At Northampton on Tuesday:—

NORTHAMPTON TOWN 2
LUTON TOWN 1

NORTHAMPTON. — Hammond; Watson, Jeffs; Allon, Maloney, Hoten; H. Jones, Robinson, Brett, Cockle, Shaw.

LUTON.—Harper; Graham, Till; Black, Rennie, Millar; Pointon, Thomson, Richards, Woods, Clark.

Referee: W. E. Greenland, London.

There was a magnificent following for the visitors, for crowds came by excursion train, charabanc, and car, and Luton got a warm reception when they turned out. They had two changes, Richards taking the centre-forward berth vice the injured Reid, and Clark coming in for Jim Thompson at outside-left. Owing to Tresadern sustaining a broken leg on Monday when playing against Brighton and Hove Albion, Robinson was brought into the home team at inside-right.

In the first half there was a considerable disparity between the teams. Luton had decidedly the better of the exchanges, pressing for long periods, and Richards showed characteristic enterprise in his new position. He was always foraging for a passage, and once tested Hammond with a good ground drive.

An appeal for a penalty-kick was made against Black when he was alleged to have handled, the referee signalling play to proceed, but at the other end Richards was tripped by Jeffs in glaring fashion a few yards from goal, and the referee again ignored the appeal. Just in time Black tore up into his own goal when Cockle had burst clean through and seemed certain to score, and the Luton half-back just managed to kick the ball off his opponent's toe. This was the prelude to a strong attack by the visitors, but Hammond and his backs were safe, and Brett twice made determined raids to the other end. A spell of midfield play followed, and then Luton attacked hotly, the ball being banged in several times.

Eventually Jeffs headed away, and before the ball touched the ground WOODS met it, and from 20 yards' range scored a lovely goal. Just afterwards the Luton right wing was plied by Richards, and Pointon sent in a nice centre for Richards to top the bar with a header. Hoten was playing good football at this time, his initiation being very fine, and most of the home team's raids came from his cleverness.

In stopping a thrust by Richards, Watson was hurt and had to be carried off, and Luton put up a series of strong attacks. Richards was knocked out in collision with Hammond, and was off temporarily. Woods twice shot with great power and tested Hammond, while the same player and Thomson sent just too high. Richards then got clean through, only to send high over the bar. Play had been getting rougher and there were many free-kicks, the Luton side getting by far the bigger number, but they could not use them to a vantage, though Richards once just missed with a neat header from Black's free-kick. At the interval Luton deservedly led by a goal to nil.

Brett went to his proper position as a full back when the game was resumed, and it was soon evident that the ten home players were intent upon levelling the scores somehow. There were fierce rushes in which man and ball were taken together, or, if the ball could not be captured, the man was not missed. Only two minutes had elapsed when the home team got a corner. Woods tried to collect the ball, but failed, and it went to Hoten, who shot. Harper saved on the line, but was promptly tackled, and SHAW kicked the ball out of his hands into the net. The Luton players did not show the determined resistance that was expected, and with the "Cobblers" playing anyhow, men being clean out of position, but working hard, all kick and rush, there was little football but plenty of excitement and an extraordinary number of free-kicks. Robinson was pulled up time after time, and Hoten also came in for punishment in the shape of free-kicks for infringements. The play was as scrappy as could be imagined, but Luton were going to pieces against the fierce assaults of the home side. In an attack by Luton, Rennie dropped the ball on the bar, and it bounded over. In a dash to the other end, a corner was won and this produced a scramble in the Town goal. Harper punched away, but was promptly bowled into the back of the net. Before he could resume his feet Shaw had returned the ball, and Hoten and two or three other players were under the bar. Millar was bundled over on his face and the ball was headed into the net by HOTEN.

Richards and Millar changed places, the latter having been badly knocked about by Robinson, and in a Luton raid Millar was pushed out of the way as Woods put the ball through to him well in front of goal.

So came the end, and most of the 2,000 spectators were glad.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the match at Northampton was the display of Hoten at half. That he has found his right place is obvious, and the only regret is that he spoils brilliant football by tactics that get him into trouble. I have always had a liking for Hoten off the field and an admiration for what he could do on it when he played the game. Robust play need not necessarily include such methods as marred Hoten's otherwise fine play, his cleverness in construction being a feature of the "Cobblers" game. Cockle is still the best forward they have and Watson was a fine back until injured.

The Town fell away in the second half and the battering they sustained at New Cross, apart from the heavy game played by the "Cobblers," had left its mark. They played as well as they were allowed to play, but lost spirit in the second half.