

LUTON GET SIX.

STORMING DISPLAY AGAINST THE PALACE.

Rapid Scoring.

(By "CRUSADER.")

LUTON TOWN 6 Goals

CRYSTAL PALACE 1 ..

LUTON. — Muir; Kingham, Graham; Black, Fulton, Fraser; Pointon, Yardley, Rennie, Harkins, Nunn.

PALACE.—Kelly; Orr, Holmes; Smith, Hamilton, Greener; Flood, Turner, Williamson, Tonner, Clarke.

Referee: Mr. J. Kelley, Harlesden.

Are we to regard this result as a turn of the tide? It follows upon a capital effort at the Den, and, even allowing for the privilege of playing at home, was a decided improvement. To those present at the previous game, the reason for that improvement was obvious. As the Town played for 45 minutes against Millwall, so they went for the full 90 minutes against the Palace, and with one or two exceptions, were good for a longer period. There was a quickness on the ball that had been lacking in previous games, especially among the halves, and there was no sagging in the second half, when the Palace made desperate efforts to recover some of the lost ground.

DESERVED TO WIN.

It is easy to over-rate the performance, however, for the Palace did not deserve to be so badly beaten. They had far more than one-seventh of the play, and at periods threatened to sweep the Town defenders off their feet and materially alter the score sheet. Nevertheless, the Town deserved to win, because they played better as a team, and maintained tactics that had the Palace halves and backs in a state of stampede. Few movements of the Town forwards could compare with the methods of attack generally adopted by the Palace front line, in which snappy passing, clever positioning, and individual trickiness often won applause.

KEPT IT MOVING.

Fortunately, the Town players did not attempt to elaborate, but kept the ball travelling across the field in lively fashion, so much so that the opposing defenders were usually yards out of position when the Town wingers were fed. This swinging style may invite the criticism of those who delight in pattern weaving, but in these days spectators usually derive pleasure from results rather than from the means of achievement, and as the Town forwards also showed a refreshing readiness to shoot hard and often, goals were always possible. This quick-ering was also something of a surprise to the Palace defence.

A GOOD START.

Almost as soon as the game opened we had a tit-bit from Nunn, and the Palace goal was in danger, but Orr relieved. The little left winger was soon in evidence again, and after a corner kick the ball was sent to the right. Black had followed up, and quickly got control. As Smith and Holmes veered to the right to cover Pointon and Yardley, BLACK held on and suddenly shot hard and low. Kelly rushed across, but the ball just beat him close to the post, and so the Town were a goal up within three minutes of the start. The Palace had been stung, and began to show much liveliness forward, especially on the right wing.

After two shots from the Palace right wing had been watched into safety by the Town goalkeeper, the ball was sent out to Pointon, and away he went at full speed. From near the corner flag he centred magnificently, and HARKINS rushed through the ruck and butted the ball past Kelly. It was a goal similar to that he obtained at the Den, and once more emphasised the importance of height and strength in the inside positions. Play was fast and vigorous after this, and one or two of the Palace forwards came in for reproof. Terrific scrimmages took place in the Town goal-mouth, the ball was banged against the upright, and once Kingham seemed to be in the goal when he kicked away.

RENNIE'S FIRST-TIMER.

It was extraordinary how the Palace failed to score in a further set-to, for it seemed as if the fierce rushes of their forwards must carry the ball into the net, and Muir was once injured when he saved splendidly near the post. Muir was hampered in an attempt to punch away, and the ball fell almost on the line, but Kingham, Fulton and Graham had fallen back, and managed to scramble the ball away. Then came another blow for the Palace. Fulton was being attended by Trainer Pakes against the rails when the ball was sent up the field. Harkins passed neatly to Rennie, who cleverly steered out to Nunn. The winger ran in and shot with great force, but Kelly saved amidst applause. The ball went out just right for RENNIE, who took it brilliantly on the run, and Kelly was beaten all the way with a grand drive hard and low.

MUNN'S SKILL.

There came an even spell, and the Palace defenders seemed glad to get the ball anywhere out of danger. Their forwards and Hamilton, however, were doing bright things, and Flood was a great trial to the Town defence. Whenever he got the ball, Nunn was a source of danger, however, and in a mazy movement on the touch-line he outwitted Smith, came inside and left Orr guessing before slipping the ball forward. The Palace defenders thought the ball was going out, but Harkins rushed up, turned it in front of goal, and POINTON, who had cut across, was presented with a gift. He almost missed it, but Kelly was equally surprised, and the

ball went between the goalkeeper's legs into the net. Kelly was held to blame, but it must not be forgotten that Pointon was not three yards out, with all the goal to hit.

THE PALACE PENALTY.

The Palace forwards pluckily pegged away when most teams would have lost heart, and there was exciting work in the Town penalty area. During a scuffle the ball was sent out of danger, but the referee was pointing to the penalty spot. None seemed to know why, but after the game Mr. Kelley told me that Harkins was guilty of pushing. There was some little delay before the kick could be taken, as Muir was inclined to step forward. However, Clarke took the kick, and hit the ball hard enough. Muir parried brilliantly, and then fell on the ball to fist it away as Turner rushed in. The referee held that the goalkeeper had encroached, however, and ordered the kick to be re-taken, and this time CLARKE made no error.

The interval came with the score:—

LUTON TOWN 4 Goals

CRYSTAL PALACE 1 ..

Nunn again led the pace on the restart, and Kelly saved grandly from the winger. Then the Palace swarmed to the attack, and Kingham and Graham had to be all alert to stem the torrent. Muir was soon in the picture, saving coolly, and clearing. Then came another of the far-fung passing movements that had beaten the Palace in the first half. The ball travelled from Graham to the middle; then to the right; Yardley, Pointon and Rennie had a foot in the proceedings, and when the winger put the ball into the centre, RENNIE lammed it past Kelly as coolly as his previous success.

PLUCKY PALACE.

Even then the Palace forwards could not be made to feel beaten, and they stormed the Town goal fiercely. Muir made several saves, but after clever work by Clarke, the ball was landed in front, and there was a rush for Muir, who was fouled and dispossessed. Williamson got the ball into the net, but the referee, who was right in the goal, promptly negated the effort, gave a free kick to the Town, and had a word with Williamson as they came back. During the next quarter-of-an-hour the Palace crowded on all sail, and Kingham was frequently applauded for brilliant tackling, while Graham also got through a lot of work, and two or three times brought the ball through the middle line and set his forwards going.

YARDLEY SUCCEEDS.

Two or three times the Palace goal was in grave danger, but always from open, swinging play, and never from attempts to dribble. Nunn came close to scoring, and Rennie headed over a centre from Pointon that should have been netted. Yardley had been hanging back a little to help the middle line, but made some nice passes to Pointon, and eventually scored. The ball went across the field twice after Nunn had led the attack, and YARDLEY, Rennie and Harkins each made a neat touch that deceived tacklers, and the first-named eventually shot hard and true, Kelly touching the ball, but being unable to prevent it finding its billet.

"STILL GOING STRONG."

In the last ten minutes the Palace seemed to realise that they had shot their bolt, and the Town maintained the offensive, some strong shots going very near the Palace goal, while Kelly made good saves. It was this ability to continue right up to the final whistle that pleased the crowd a great deal, and with a little more earnestness Rennie might have completed the hat-trick at least. It was a good wind-up to a fast and exciting encounter, in which the number of goals was nothing like an accurate reflection of the balance of play, but the opportunism of the Town was the supreme feature.

PLAYERS.

Muir may not be altogether a polished custodian, but is as agile as they are made, and with a less capable custodian to face the Palace might have got as many goals as the Town. Kingham once more brought upon himself a shower of eulogies, and is developing into a champion. Graham was better than at the Den, and his job was made heavier by reason of the fact that Fraser was not quite up to the very high standard he has reached. This does not mean that the left half was poor; by no means, but he met the cleverest wing pair the Town have had in opposition to date, and could not master them at will.

BLACK IMPROVES.

Another feature that pleased was the brighter display given by Black. It may be that his success so soon after the start gave him greater confidence. The fact remains that he touched his best quality of last season, and though he found Clarke a warm handful, and was grateful for the assistance received from Kingham, the Town right half initiated many attacks, and his passing was seldom at fault. Fulton was a defensive rather than an attacking force, and did magnificent work during the hottest assaults of the Palace. He showed signs of fatigue in the second half, but got a hard knock that took a lot of steam out of him.

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SPEED AND STAMINA.

The main feature of the forward work were speed and stamina, allied to shooting power. As a result of the improvement of Black, the right wing did much better. Pointon was not on full song, but did fine work when he got the right pass, and centred much better than usual. Yardley helped him along well, bustling strongly, and keeping the ball moving briskly. Rennie's shooting needs no comment beyond that he has proved he can be deadly, but he gave delightful passes, too, and showed full appreciation of the wisdom of keeping his wing men employed. Harkins is likely to be ponderous for a long time but, like Rennie, at times he made clever passes to his winger, and never burked the fray. Nunn suffers a little by the crudeness of Harkins, but again took the gilt-edged testimonial for all-round excellence. He is a great little winger.

THE PALACE.

Kelly was probably blamed for two of the goals, but the Palace weakness was not there. It was in the middle line. Hamilton played grandly, but the swinging methods of the Town forwards would have got any defence in trouble, and the rapidity with which the ball was swung about found the Palace middle and back divisions unable to get a real grip on the game. The forwards were very clever, the right wing at times being really brilliant, and but for the desperate tackling by the Town halves, the steadiness of Kingham and the skill of Muir, the Palace would have scored more than once.

There were nearly 10,000 spectators, and they got full value for their money.