

LUTON LOSE AT SELHURST.

POWERFUL PALACE DEFENCE.

By Crusader.

EVER since Crystal Palace ousted Luton Town from the F.A. Cup competition I have fancied their chances as champions of their section. The team is modelled on the lines of other successful promotion candidates—Portsmouth, Southampton, Reading and Millwall. I was informed that the Palace officials had actually taken Southampton as their model in building up this team, but am sure the "Saints" would not like to think that they gained honours by the methods that characterised the play of the Palace.

Not all the Palace players should be tarred with the brush of unfairness, and those readers who saw the game will agree that there was not much to complain about if one eliminated from criticism Charlton, the Palace captain, Havelock, Greener and Hamilton. All these are big, rough fellows, with a tendency to attack the man and to make the ball a secondary consideration. "Attack" is a more emphatic word than "tackle." These tactics changed the run of the game from a pleasant to an ugly affair. Otherwise, I doubt if the Palace would have won.

There was a fine entertainment until the Palace defenders began to get rattled by the enterprise and the quick transference of the Town forwards, several of whom were brought down after the ball had gone, while on occasion desperate kicks that would have arrived late for the ball deterred Rennie and his colleagues from taking a shot. Hamilton was early caught in this, thanks to the vigilance of the linesman, but he went from bad to worse, and the culmination came at half-time.

The players were leaving the field after the whistle had gone, and the ball was at rest far away from the scene, when Hamilton came up behind Yardley and kicked him as he was walking behind the referee. Yardley at once turned on Hamilton, who slipped away, but the linesman was in the rear, and drew the attention of the referee to the matter. Mr. Franklin got the two players together, and after a few questions began to write in his notebook. Hamilton rushed away for the dressing room, but he did not escape, for the referee followed him there and severely cautioned him.

The footwork of Roe appeared to upset the Palace players, Havelock, Greener and Charlton, and on four or five occasions he was badly fouled. He also retaliated, and the referee spoke to all these players, though whether he took their names or not I cannot say. Retaliation is natural, perhaps, but it is asking for trouble, because, as a rule, the second man comes off the worse. In the case of Hamilton, however, more may be heard very shortly.

The Palace won the match because they carried too many big guns for the Town forwards. The run of the game favoured the Town for quite an hour, and their supporters were agreeably surprised by the way in which they opened out at the very start. The Palace defenders were kept at full stretch, and became very harassed. Their clever wing men, upon whom they chiefly rely for the efficacy of their attack, were kept subdued, and seldom got the better of the Town flank halves and backs, who played with fine understanding.

In the first quarter of an hour Rennie showed good marksmanship, and had he managed to get home with either of two splendid shots, the first saved at full length by Callender and the other hitting the jointure of upright and cross-bar, there might have been a different result. The Palace forwards gave little trouble to Banes, though infrequent raids tested Richards and Harris, until nearly half-an-hour had elapsed. Then came their opening goal, favoured with luck. Clarke got the ball into the middle, and Griffiths shot hard. Banes hit the ball out with his left hand, and it went straight on to HAVELOCK, who was rushing in, and returned it into the net.

The Palace had few good chances other than this before the change of ends, though Harry pulled out neat work. At the other end Daly and Bedford often brought danger, but Callender and his backs were alert, and though Rennie, Roe and Yardley all made strong efforts, they were forced back by the vigorous resistance of the home defence. Rennie narrowly missed from a free kick on the edge of the penalty area just before change of ends, but the Palace still held their lead then.

The second half found the Palace desperately intent on adding to their lead early on, and Banes was kept busy for some minutes, one save at full length from Griffiths being worthy of the generous applause. They were driven back, Richards being conspicuous with clever forcing work, and hot attacks were launched, first the right and then the left wing leading the way.

Charlton and Roe again got at loggerheads, and the referee had a word with them, but they were at it again a moment later. A free kick against Charlton promised better things than accrued, for three corners were forced in quick succession, and Callender was dancing about his goal, expecting often when shots struck the packed defence.

There could be no question as to the better football team, and though Clarke and Harry gave trouble now and then, the Town were doing most of the attacking, and only the desperate nature of the defence kept them out. So the game went on until 20 minutes had elapsed from the interval. Then Butler and Clarke got away, and the former got over a good centre, which found HARRY unmarked right in front of the goal, and he beat Banes with a fast, low, swerving shot.

The Palace were encouraged by this, and before the Town defence had recovered they came again on the left. Banes punched out from the left wing, and then Wilde sent the ball back again for the goalkeeper to catch as he fell to his knees. As he rose HAVELOCK dashed at him, and in attempting to throw away the goalkeeper sent the ball against the forward and it rebounded into the net.

The Town pegged away to the end, but they could not master the rugged defence. Centres from Daly and Bedford invariably found the Palace backs on the waiting list, and Callender remained unbeaten. Once Roe dribbled through and eluded Charlton's wild rush, but his parting shot, a real beauty from an acute angle, just topped the bar after beating Callender's outstretched arms.

The score was against the run of the play, but the Palace heavy weights were too much for the Town attack. Roe and Yardley never flinched, but there was too much brawn in the Palace goal area, and shots and centres were turned again and again. In the open the Town were the cleverer side, and played fine, fast football, but their finishing was not good enough.

The halves did very well until late in the game, when they fell away from the first half standard, and the Palace wingers got a little more scope. Richards and Harris, particularly the former, were splendid backs, and Banes kept goal well. For the Palace, Wetherby, Wilde, Harry and Clarke were best.

There were 25,000 spectators, the receipts exceeding £1,500.

CRYSTAL PALACE	3
LUTON TOWN	0

CRYSTAL PALACE. — Callender; Wetherby, Charlton; Hamilton, Wilde, Greener; Harry, Havelock, Griffiths, Butler, Clarke.

LUTON TOWN. — Banes; Richards, Harris, Clark, Fulton, Fraser; Daly, Roe, Rennie, Yardley, Bedford.

Referee: Mr. G. Franklin, Portsmouth.

PALACE	1
LUTON TOWN	0