

At Selhurst on Saturday:—

CRYSTAL PALACE 5

LUTON TOWN 1

Scorers for Palace—Clarke, Frost, Simpson (3).

For Luton—M'Nestry.

CRYSTAL PALACE:—Imrie; Wetherby, Charlton; Frost, Barrie, Greener; Harry, Havelock, Simpson, Butler, Clarke.

LUTON TOWN: — Banes; Kingham, Richards; Richmond, Clark, Hale; M'Nestry, Yardley, McGinnigle, Armstrong, Slicer.

Referee:—Mr. J. M. Wiltshire, Sherborne.

LUTON TOWN may well regard Selhurst as something of a "noodoo" ground, and the influence was almost at its worst on Saturday. By the way the Crystal Palace began their business there seemed a real likelihood of beating that win of seven goals to one sustained by Luton in the replayed Cup-tie on an ice-bound ground a year ago last January. The Town players seemed to be just about as helpless as on that day, and the Palace just as efficient.

Four goals in half an hour was fierce going, but every goal was deserved, and it could not be said that the Town had deserved a goal, or that they had experienced very much hard luck up till then. Indeed, the Palace had come near scoring two or three times in addition to their successes, and while the Town were almost as often in the other half of the field as they were on the defensive, there was a painful difference between the methods of the teams, and it was herein that the Palace took toll.

Every goal was of the opportunist type, and it was the aptitude of the Palace forwards to make the most of their chances that so decisively won the game. They carried more punch than the Town, appeared to be better equipped in the matter of physique, and certainly did not refrain from using it in any department, though there have been more vigorous encounters between the teams..

There was a distinct tendency among the Town players to try and play a "hasten slowly" game, and the Palace halves were too quick on the ball for the Town halves, and their halves too quick for the Town forwards. So the Palace defenders were not given many anxious moments, whereas Banes and his backs were always at full stretch when the home forwards got on the move. Added to this was the unhesitating manner in which the Palace forwards and halves shot for goal when they got within range.

If charging were taboo I am sure the Town would be as good as the Palace, but it is an essential part of the game, and so long as players use their weight fairly they do well to use it. We had Richmond and Hale, and even Clark, omitting to do so, and it was not until the second half that they discovered the error. When they brought energy as well as such skill as they possessed into play they more than held their own, and the average spectator who saw only the second half would have said it was a very even match.

As in each of the two previous games, the Town were slow off the mark, not only slow collectively, but individually, and forwards and halves were hustled out of possession with a consistency that was very disquieting to the supporters, and threatened overwhelming defeat. The attacks were made usually by means of individual skill, and in this respect both Slicer and M'Nestry could be trusted to carry the struggle into the opposing territory, but the big Palace defenders gave no quarter, and rarely was Imrie troubled in the first half. Once Yardley made a great dribble, but McGinnigle kept expecting a pass, and Yardley was so hampered when he took his final shot that the ball trickled into Imrie's hands.

In the second half for some time the Palace renewed their tactics, but met with no further success until late, for the Town defenders were realising that more brawn was necessary, and gradually they drove the enemy back and eventually asserted some degree of mastery over the Palace halves, and both Wetherby and Charlton had to defend grimly. Imrie time after time nailed the centres from the Town extreme wingers by fine anticipation in advancing from goal, and his fielding was very safe. Once he was brought down, and a goal seemed certain, but he managed to get the ball away.

Bright play on the Town right wing showed some measure of understanding by Yardley of the needs and the usefulness of M'Nestry, and it came as no surprise that the latter scored. He had been a rare thorn for some time to Greener and Charlton, and at last he took a sweeping pass from Yardley, cut in, dribbling cleverly, and wound up with a shot that had Imrie beaten all the way. But the Palace promptly replied, and a bad mix-up among the Town defenders gave Simpson a chance of which he took toll, and completed his hat trick.