

Crusader Comments

ON THE LATEST DISAPPOINTMENT

CRYSTAL PALACE strengthened the views of those of us who fancy that they will yet prove good enough to overhaul Notts County, and beat them in the race for promotion. They proved at Luton on Saturday that they were more of the type of team to win a Third Division championship, for they are a big, powerful and stubborn team, with a lot of clever footballers, and some who can make up any deficiency of skill by vigour, though there was not a lot to complain about in that respect on Saturday.

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They secured a sound lead in half-an-hour, and then showed the ability, and had the considerable slice of good fortune that enabled them to keep it. There was a determination and workmanship about their style in the opening play that carried them to a reasonable measure of success, though in spite of the contingent of London writers, who came down and lauded them as the better side in all respects, I think the Town showed on the whole the more skilful football, and that they should have won with a bit in hand.

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I had the Town been able to take advantage of their opportunities they would have won, but there was not the necessary punch in the attack to enable them to overcome a stout-hearted and unrelenting defence. Perhaps it was not so much the absence of thrust, however, as the error of tactics. The Palace got their goals while the going was reasonably good, and before the effects of the roller had been completely effaced. Then the mud was churned up, and it was annoying to see the persistent way in which the Town tried to force the ball through ankle-deep mud in the middle of the field, while the wingers were vainly waiting for a pass.

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If M'Nestry and Bryce had been as freely employed as were the Palace wingers, there would have been a lot more danger to the Palace goal, and, in all conscience, there was quite enough to have earned more than one penalty goal. Indeed, Callender had thrice as much work as Harford, and though the Town goalkeeper had some troublesome stuff, and made splendid saves in each half, Callender had greater tasks, and achieved them brilliantly. It was his work, and the protective influence of his backs and halves that determined the result, especially in the last half-hour, when there was virtually only one team in it from the attacking point of view.

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SIMPSON got his usual goal for the visitors, after twenty minutes' play, though he had indicated plainly that he should have been very closely watched. A nice pass through the middle by Butler gave the leader his chance, and he defied all efforts to dislodge him as he burst between the backs, and wound up with a fast low shot that beat the approaching Harford all ends up. The second goal came following a rapid exchange of skirmishes, during the course of which Harry had missed a good chance by lifting the ball against the bar when he

should have scored. He centred nicely, however, and with the ball clearing all the defenders, **BUTLER** had an easy goal.

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The Town had been the more consistent in attacks, but had not finished any too well, or, if they did get in a shot Callender was always in the right place, and made grand saves. Eventually, however, from a rush on the left-wing Callender and his backs had a job to save off Rennie's rush, and when the centre-forward looked like scoring a defender handled. The referee was in some doubt, but a linesman was not, and **RENNIE** scored easily from the penalty-kick, and the goal was deserved, if not overdue, on the run of the game.

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That completed the scoring, for although the Town had much the better of the play in the second half, they could not beat Callender. Time after time it seemed as though they must get on level terms, but always at the crucial moment something turned up to avert a goal. Rennie, Armstrong and Bryce all had good shots saved. Many corners were forced, but try as they would the Town could not beat Callender. Two or three times they were hauled up for offside when right under the bar; once M'Nestry struck the bar, and Callender made a really extraordinary save from Bryce when everybody was shouting for the equalising goal.

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In the last half-hour the Palace had to rely on nearly all their team to serve as defenders, so that one saw Harry robbing Bryce close to the Palace corner flag, and Butler chasing M'Nestry right to the goal-line, while the inside forwards were half-backs, and even Simpson took the place of the centre-half, who was acting as a full-back for more than three-fourths of the game. But the methods served to succeed, and the Town halves and forwards failed to break down a very gallant defence.

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Harford did well, but Callender had much more work, and there was no back on the field cleverer than Kingham. He played splendidly all through, and Smith was a valiant partner. McGinnigle and Fraser were disposed to hold the ball too long when the forwards might have received to advantage, but Gale played magnificently, and his powerful physique was a big asset. Of the Town forwards Rennie was most consistent, and again put more enthusiasm into his work, though meeting with little luck in his shooting. Armstrong and Yardley played well to a point, or there could not have been such an advantage in attack, but they stuck too long in the mud, and M'Nestry and Bryce, usually dangerous when provided with opportunities, did not get enough work.

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For the Palace, Callender was the paramount factor in the success, his goalkeeping being brilliant. His backs did great work though there was not a lot of care in their clearances. Rivers was the most orthodox half, Greener letting a lot of work fall upon Charlton, and Wilde was simply another full-back for the greater part of the game. In a fast and clever forward line the wings got plenty of work, but all the inside men showed skill and passed and dribbled well.

There were 8,000 spectators.

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LUTON TOWN.—Harford; Kingham, Smith; Gale. McGinnigle, Fraser; M'Nestry, Armstrong, Rennie, Yardley, Bryce.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—Callender; Crilly, Charlton; Rivers, Wilde, Greener; Harry, Turner, Simpson, Butler, Clarke.

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