

FAILURE AT SELHURST

LUTON TOWN THREE DOWN IN LAST MATCH

Feeble Finishing

(By Crusader)

CRYSTAL PALACE 3
LUTON TOWN 0

PALACE. — Dunn; Crilly, Parry; Brown, Barrie, Wilde; Harry, Turner, Simpson, Walters, Berry.

LUTON. — Harford; Coote, Mackey; Kean, McGinnigle, Fraser; Mills, Hutchison, Tait, Rennie, Rowe.

Referee. — Mr. P. Graham, Coventry.

CRYSTAL PALACE had the advantage of play from the territorial aspect in this, the last match of the season. They were not the better football side — not by a long way. As a scientific side the Town were clearly superior, and lost by reason of a combination of circumstances that could in the main be termed misfortunes. Perhaps the chief fault, however, was that their attractive midfield play was not consummated efficiently. To that must be added the fact that Charlie Fraser was dead lame for nearly the whole of the second half, and two of the goals were initiated as a direct consequence of his inability to intercept in midfield. These were the drawbacks, but the game had its compensations, and the few supporters who made the journey from Luton to Selhurst were not displeased with the work of the team as a whole.

BELIEF IN "BEEF"

The Palace had the advantage of the breeze in the opening period, but we nearly had a goal before a Palace player had touched the ball. After Rennie had swung the ball out to the right, Mills went through and centred first time before Parry could get at him, and Rennie cunningly skimmed the ball out to Rowe, who raced in, but his shot hit the bar and bounded over. This promptly put the Palace on their mettle, and they set about their business with their wonted vigour, for they are a hefty lot, and believe in "beef" being put to good use. However, they

found in Coote and Mackey a pair quite willing to accept a test, and for a considerable time there was no real menace to Harford's charge. The Town forwards were the more dangerous, and the Palace backs had a more difficult job than the Town pair. Control was difficult, and one big kick from Mackey dropped the ball somewhere near the penalty spot, whence it bounced right over the bar. Simpson soon found that he could not bore through in the manner for which he is quite famous, but his inside colleagues showed a lot of skill as the team began to settle down, and after a fine effort from Walters had gone close there was a lovely drive from Turner that brought a yell from the crowd, for the ball seemed bound to pass just inside the upright, but Harford leaped across and made a thrilling save.

"PARRYING"

The Town forwards and halves were playing cleverly, and on a big ground I doubt if they have ever used the ball to such good purpose. Their positioning was fine: with Hutchison and Rennie drawing opponents and slipping the ball to right or left the Palace halves and backs were kept on the run. Mills was playing very well against an opponent who should have been penalised time after time, but was allowed to go about halfway towards all-in wrestling. More than once Parry wrapped arms or legs round the Town winger. At the other end Coote was settling down very well indeed, and Mackey was playing magnificently. However, neither goalkeeper was in frequent demand, and such work as came their way was not difficult. Once Harry made a sparkling run and centred, and everybody expected a goal as Simpson took the ball and rushed through to within a few feet of Harford, but before he could shoot properly Coote dashed across and bowled him over with a grand bit of shoulder work, for which he was complimented by Fred Kean. Immediately afterwards the ball rose awkwardly as Coote went to clear, and Berry nipped in and might have scored had he shot, but he preferred to turn the ball in front of goal for Simpson, but McGinnigle was there first and took possession.

A COMPARISON

The Town inside wingers were doing brilliant work for their wingers, but

Howe found difficulty in getting the ball into the middle, and two or three times the ball went behind. Mills did better with his passes, but the Palace goal area was well tended, and both Crilly and Parry headed clear time after time. Tait could not keep the ball at his feet, but once Hutchison found Mills with a neat pass, and the winger shot the ball forward for Tait to race past the backs, and from ten yards' range a fine shot skimmed the bar at lightning speed. Walters made two or three strong attempts to break through, but Mackey had his measure when it came to a straight tussle, and the ball went from end to end. Coote, also, was doing very well, but there was a tendency among some of the defenders to hold the ball too long—a fault that the Palace backs avoided, for they kicked with great power and never waited to round an opponent before getting the ball away. It was owing to this close play in the Town penalty area that there was a fierce assault, lasting for some seconds, and Wilde drew a bow at a venture, his shot beating a crowd of players to hit the upright, and when Simpson pounced on the ball and again seemed a certain scorer Harford dived at his feet and turned the ball round the post.

HARRY'S GOAL

There was more clever play at the other end after this escape, and a fine movement all along the front line ended with Rennie firing over the bar. Time after time the home backs and halves were forced to tackle and kick desperately, and when the Town forwards did get a chance they usually shot too high. Once Hutchison slipped through, and Parry appeared to hold the ball in his hands as he stopped the forward, but the appeal for a penalty kick was unheeded. It was following some fine play by the Town that the Palace got away to open the scoring, though there was an element of luck about the goal. The ball was put into the middle by Harry, and player after player of the Town tried to head the ball away when a kick was required; eventually Simpson got his head to it and nodded it to the right, where HARRY was lying in wait, and the little winger gave Harford no chance to stop a hard shot. Several free kicks were awarded against the Palace, but as many were missed as were granted, and Parry infringed many times without penalty. Interval:

PALACE	1
TOWN	Nil

The Town were slow in showing their faces after the re-start, though they were generally in the Palace half, for they now had the advantage of the breeze. First-time kicking by the Palace backs and halves prevented any danger to Dunn's charge, but the goalkeeper had to run out and grasp a header from Tait when Mills and Hutchison had broken through. Then there was another delightful movement, in which the whole of the halves and the forwards took part, and the Palace defenders could not get near the ball; Howe finally sent into the middle, and Hutchison took the ball in his stride and burst through, but a desperate rush by Crilly saved the goal when all seemed lost for the Palace. The Town came again and again, and a nice through pass by Rennie went to Tait, but he could not get the run of the ball, and a great chance was lost. Crilly again had to put behind to keep Rowe from centreing, but an egregious blunder by the referee evoked roars of laughter—not for the first time—from the crowd close to that end. The Town were playing magnificently now, their football being quite brilliant, and Rennie completely bamboozled a couple of opponents, and then placed the ball carefully all along the ground for Tait

within a few yards of goal, but the centre-forward did not hit it hard enough, and Dunn picked up without difficulty.

FRASER CRIPPLED

Misfortune came to the Town when Fraser, who, with Kean and McGinnigle, had a big part in the skilful work of the Town forwards, received a kick, and thereafter he could only hobble about. As a result the Palace became more dangerous on the right wing, and Harry was more in evidence. Time after time he got away to swing the ball into the middle, and Harford had a lot more work. The Town goalkeeper made a save that made the crowd gasp, for a sharp header from Walters at close quarters was caught as brilliantly as any slip fielder could take a snap catch in cricket. Decisions by the referee again caused the crowd a lot of laughter, and he certainly was in error several times. Walters accepted a centre from Harry and then ran over to the right wing before screwing in a shot that hit the farther post and returned across the goalmouth, to be scrambled away. Rennie and Rowe then got through at the other end, and the inside-left again tricked the defence and sent in a magnificent shot which scraped the whitewash from the bar as it went over. Simpson made a determined rush at the other end, but Mackey boldly barred his way and floored him, and the Palace centre-forward had to retire for a few minutes to have a damaged eye bathed. When he returned it was to some purpose. Tait had made an ineffectual attempt to bore through after receiving from Rennie, and then the Palace went away on the right. Fraser could not move to stop Harry, and the ball was landed across to the left, then returned to SIMPSON, who, from three or four yards' range, shot into the net. Within a couple of minutes McGinnigle handled just outside the penalty area, and SIMPSON nearly broke the net with a glorious drive.

BRIGHT TO THE LAST

In the remaining play the Town were still clever without being able to round off their attacks. McGinnigle put in a fine shot from a free kick, but Dunn saved well. Then Parry deliberately fisted the ball down within a couple of yards of goal, but the referee refused the clamour of the Town players for a penalty kick. A goal had again seemed a certainty, and the offence was so flagrant that the Town and the Palace players stood stock still, with the exception of Parry, who kicked clear, and then grinned happily when he saw that he had escaped. The Town attacked hotly, although they had now lost Fraser, but they either shot straight at Dunn or too high, and though there were frequent scrammages in the Palace goalmouth, the goal escaped. At the other end Harford punched away splendidly several times, and the play continued to be of interest right to the end.

PLAYERS

Harford had no chance with any of the shots that scored, and he kept goal as well as he ever has done since he came to Luton. Mackey was at his best, and in the first half was often brilliant, while Coote surpassed expectations in this, his first game with the first eleven. He has a good deal to learn, no doubt, but he was up against a strong attack, and he kicked and tackled well under pressure. When he has had a little more experience and has learned that he must get closer to his man and do it with more speed, he should develop into a sound defender. He surprised some of those who had thought that the occasion would be too big. The halves played clever football. McGinnigle did not settle down quickly, but Simpson could get little peace until the retirement of Fraser threw a heavier burden on the Town centre-half. Kean and Fraser played with rare craft, and it was their fine nursing of the forwards that enabled the front line to be so much in the picture. Mills did very well, perhaps better than Rowe on the whole, but the best of the forwards were Rennie and Hutchison, who gave Tait a lot of passes that were not used well, for the centre-forward could not keep the lively ball under control.

Dunn had not as much work as Harford. His backs were sound, but Parry, who is nicknamed "The Octopus" by the Palace followers because of the free use of his arms, should have been penalised time after time. The halves were big kickers rather than skilful feeders, but the forwards were a bright lot, and superior to the Town. Turner was very clever, Walters was almost as prominent, and the other three made the most of their opportunities. There were 5,000 spectators.