

CRYSTAL PALACE CRUSHED SMASHING SUCCESS FOR LUTON TOWN

Forwards in Finishing Form

COOK'S HAT TRICK

(By CRUSADER)

LUTON TOWN	6
CRYSTAL PALACE	0
Cook (3), Stephenson, Turner, Crook.	

LUTON.—Coen; Kingham, Smith; Colquhoun, Nelson, Kidd; Crook, Roberts, Cook, Stephenson, Turner.

PALACE.—Read; Haynes, Parry; Turner, Wilde, Smith (W. S.); Carson, Manders, Dawes, Waldron, Bigg.

Referee A. W. Smith, Histon.

WE were promised a battle royal when the game was started at Luton on Saturday, but the invaders were utterly routed before the game had been in progress an hour. While some may sigh for the delights of what we know as classic football, we could not be otherwise than gratified by the result, gained as it undoubtedly was by superior pace and punch. The early stages gave little indication of the resoluteness and energy Luton were to infuse into their work, and only a very bold supporter would have dared to suggest a banquet of six goals against the stalwart Palace defence.

BUBBLE PRICKED

Moreover, the Palace vanguard went about their business with a coolness and celerity that taxed the resources of the Town defence, and seemed set to spring one of their periodic snooks at Luton. Thanks to the eagerness with which the Town met the challenge, the bubble was soon pricked, and after the first fifteen minutes the Town were always the better side, and were giving constant evidence of it as the game proceeded. The fact that Read, the Palace goalkeeper, had to leave the field was regrettable, but it is probable that the margin of success would have been extended had he remained, for the Town slackened appreciably when they had the game well won. Wilde, who deputised for the injured custodian, probably appreciated that more than anyone else.

FIRST SCORE—

The first real scare to either side was the shot by Dawes, who worked out to the right and then drove in a beautiful low shot which had Coen beaten all the way, but while the goalkeeper was sprawling on the turf, the ball struck the upright, and Kingham, with a full sense of gratitude, I am sure, booted it clear. The Town's attempts were rather ragged, and the Palace defence opposed with steady confidence. There came a sharpening up by the Town forwards, and the Palace defenders wavered. Cook was frustrated only just in time, and from the subsequent flag-kick there was a determined assault, and Crook netted with a pretty overhead shot, but the referee adjudged offside someone who was in no way interfering with the play.

AND FIRST SCORE

We were soon given compensation for this elementary error, and the Palace defenders could not keep pace with the nippy opposition. Now and then Carson made a sprint and gave trouble, testing Coen once with a fine effort, but for the most part the advantage was with the Town, and they had no more than their deserts when COOK headed a grand goal from Crook's flag-kick after a bang by Turner had struck Parry and gone behind. The Palace made a strong but barren attempt to break down the home defence, and Read was brought into action frequently. He did his part splendidly, and thwarted rousing attacks.

CROOK AND COOK AGAIN

The crowd had become angry when the humorous Wilde persistently put his elbows into Cook's back, and after missing several faults, the referee recognised the justice of the claims, and Wilde gave away several free-kicks before he also came to understand that he had been caught. The attacks of the Town persisted, and those of the Palace became less and less frequent, and the crowd enjoyed the directness and earnestness of the Town assaults. Read did great work, and was hurt two or three times by his daring saves at close quarters, but he was beaten by another header from COOK after the left wing had made the attack, and Crook had returned the ball into the middle following receipt of a long pass.

PALACE OVER-RUN

Dawes was well held by Nelson, but Carson and Manders, and now and then Waldron, had a try, and Coen had one or two awkward handfuls, but his job was a watchman's compared with that of Read. Many times the Palace goalkeeper retrieved the situation when his colleagues were completely outwitted, and at this stage the Palace halves were quite over-run, and the backs were required to put in over-work. It was a good lead at the interval.

LUTON	2
PALACE	0

There were a few exciting moments at each end after the restart, the Palace making desperate endeavours to rally. Once Coen, after making a good save, tried to do too much, and lost the ball, and he was lucky to see the ball scrambled away. However, the Town found their stride again, and, for the remainder of the game, there was virtually only one team in it. The third goal came from COOK, who thus achieved the "hat-trick." The move came on the left wing, and a hard drive by Turner along the ground brought Read down full length to push the ball away; Stephenson darted in with it, but was foiled, the ball going to the right where Cook easily netted.

REFEREE ON THE SPOT

Read was obviously in great pain, and yet kept goal finely. Once he was fortunate, for the Palace defenders were waiting for an offside decision against Turner when he had raced past the backs to snap up a pass; Turner himself apparently was

in some doubt about it, and hesitated before he banged the ball on to the goalkeeper's chest. From the flag-kick by Turner, STEPHENSON leapt higher than the defender and nodded the ball downwards into goal; Read made a great effort, and knocked the ball out, but the referee happened to be close to the post when the ball went in, and he had no hesitation about his decision.

READ RETIRES

At this point Read had to retire, assisted from the field by his trainer, and the crowd cheered sympathetically. Wilde donned the green jersey. The tendency of the Town defenders to take things easily was almost fatal, and only a very fine save by Coen prevented Dawes reducing the deficit. However, the Town took up the pressure again, and Parry hurt himself when he rushed into a crowd of attackers and defenders and held up the assault. The fifth goal was not long delayed. Wilde made a few saves, and then there was a quick attack, and Cook booked the ball over his head to the left; TURNER might have headed it, but instead he took position, and hit the ball at terrific speed into the net, Wilde being helpless.

THE ROUND HALF-DOZEN

Play was generally in the Palace penalty area, and many attacks were beaten off by clever positioning to get offside decisions. Now and then there were raids by the visitors but the forwards had little of the ball, and Wilde and his backs were kept busy, although the Town were more disposed to adopt fancy methods than to move hard after goals. In a quick dash by Cook to the left he beat Haynes and lifted the ball right across goal; Stephenson closed in, and headed the ball against Wilde, from whom it went direct for CROOK to put through and make the round half-dozen.

SPECTACULAR SAVE

Of the rest of the play little need be said. Two or three times, Wilde made very good saves, while he knew little about a shot from Turner that crashed against the bar. The Town kept the ball in the Palace half generally, but there were occasions when they slackened, and, from one of these, the Palace should have scored, but Coen raced out, and covered Dawes's hard shot, the ball striking the goalkeeper. Coen had two or three more shots to save, but there was little likelihood of the Palace scoring after Coen's spectacular save.

TOWN DEFENCE

Coen was quite safe, and had several difficult shots to deal with in spite of the balance of play being with the Town. Kingham played his best game to date, having the measure of Bigg all the time, and he kicked and tackled skilfully. Smith was ubiquitous as ever; a little too boisterous now and then, perhaps, but giving confidence to his colleagues. Nelson again proved that he is adapting himself to the Third Division style, but his purpose in trying to use the ball to advantage was frequently misunderstood by some of the crowd, who preferred the hefty clearance. That the defence has had a run of four games without conceding a goal should not be overlooked. Kidd also played his best game, using the ball better, and his tackling was judicious as well as purposeful. Colquhoun was not at his best in defence, though he found Crook and Roberts a lot of work.

UNIFORM ATTACK

In the attack, none was better than his mates. Every man worked with determined spirit, and unselfishly. There were glimpses of combination, too, especially on the wings, and the ball was swung about in a way that puzzled the Palace defenders no end. Cook's "hat-trick" will give him more confidence than ever but all along the line, there was readiness to challenge the defenders, and that the finishing was so much better was proved by the score.

PALACE PLAYERS

Read proved a splendid goalkeeper, and both Haynes and Parry worked tremendously hard in the Palace rear, while Wilde did good service without being able to check inside forwards who exchanged and interchanged positions frequently. The flank halves were beaten for pace, and the forwards had little help after the first 15 minutes, but little Carson was a warm proposition, and Manders and Waldron were more than useful. Dawes found Nelson difficult to overcome.

There were 12,842; receipts £266 11s.