

LUTON TOWN CRASH

THREE GOALS DOWN IN FIRST TEN MINUTES

VALIANT EFFORT TO RECOVER

By *Crusader*

LUTON TOWN'S splendid run in the League came to an end against CRYSTAL PALACE at Selhurst yesterday afternoon, and a sorry crash it was.

Let me say at once, however, that there was no disgrace in the fall; it was the penalty of their gallant fight in the Cup-tie at Manchester. Of that there could be no doubt. Right from the start the Palace went off with a bang and were three goals up in ten minutes.

One of their goals I thought was offside, and another came from a penalty kick, an absurd decision against Nelson, who simply bundled Wood off the ball as he was dribbling in from the corner flag, and Nelson just knocked him over the line with the ball. The Town players protested vigorously, but the referee was adamant.

PALACE DESERVED TO WIN

Nevertheless, in spite of these errors, the Palace deserved their win; they got one other goal that was certainly offside, but they also had two goals disallowed, one for offside when that appeared to be an impossible position, and the other for some reason that could not be determined from the stand, although some of the on-lookers thought it was for offside.

The Palace won because their forwards were very much quicker than the Town defenders, especially at the outset. Undoubtedly the Town players had not got over their Manchester experience, at least, the defenders had not, but the forward line played very well and gave Dunn, the Palace goalkeeper, quite as much work as Coen had, but he was much better covered than was the Town custodian.

NO NEED FOR ALARM

There is no need to become unduly alarmed by this defeat. All the odds were on the Palace, for they were free from League or Cup worries last Saturday, and they were very fresh. Their forwards played open and sparkling football throughout, though for quite long periods in each half the Town kept the Palace defence very hard pressed.

Fellowes won the toss and elected to take advantage of a stiff breeze. The ground was very heavy. A promising attack by the Town left was the first incident of note, and Roberts, with plenty of time to take aim, got too far under the ball, and it sailed over.

FIRST GOAL

The Palace swung the ball about, and made use of their extreme wingers, and Bigg shot wide when he had a good chance. Pressure was maintained, however, and reward came after five minutes, when Wood lifted the ball right across to the left, Bigg returned it, and the ball was repelled; DAWES took possession and lobbed the ball high into goal; it was not meant for a shot, but the wind swerved it right out of the reach of Coen.

The Palace immediately came again, the ball being passed very accurately by the Palace forwards, and their wingers were given a lot of scope. Coen saved grandly from Bigg, but in a return visit Wood again lifted the ball over to the left wing; Bigg dribbled past Mackey and centred for BIRTLEY to nip in and score, an appeal for offside being negatived.

MAKING IT THREE

The Town forwards had a turn, and Martin tested Dunn with a hard shot, and just afterwards had another drive fielded. The Palace replied, and Wood was forced over the line by Nelson, and to the consternation of the Town players the referee awarded a penalty kick. DAWES took the shot and scored.

SMITH PROMINENT

Smith was prominent with good defensive play, and Fellowes set his wing going, Stephenson dropping the ball in front for Wilde to head out. The Town had the better of the game for some time, and made some nice movements, but they were frustrated at close quarters by strong defensive play.

The Palace left wing again was well served by the right, and Bigg raced through and shot wide, and at the other end Roberts had a similar experience.

In a strong raid by the Palace, Bigg met a pass and raced close in to score, the linesman flagging him offside; the referee allowed the player to go on and score before giving his decision against the Palace.

The Town retaliated, and Fellowes took a speculative shot when Dunn was out of goal, and the ball went a yard wide. Mackey saved a certain goal when he blocked a shot from Blackman, and then a great shot by Roberts was splendidly saved by Dunn. Martin twice tested Dunn, who also saved finely from Roberts, and just before the interval Dunn again made a marvellous save from Crompton. Half-time:

Mackey cleared a Palace attack when the game was resumed, but Bigg forced a corner just afterwards, Nelson clearing. Finlayson sent Crompton away, and he got the ball over well, but Wilde cleared. Stephenson next ran through and centred right across goal, Wilde intercepting just in time. Again the Town left-winger made the pace, and Wilde was the man to stave off danger. Crompton forced a corner, but the ball was got away, and Wood and Birtley took play to the other end, Coen saving at full length when a splendid header from Blackman looked like a goal.

DUNN BUSY

The Town replied, playing with spirit, and Roberts dribbled well and dropped the ball in front, Dunn showing nice anticipation. Clever play by Ball and Martin gave Crompton a fine chance, but the winger shot too high, and in a return visit Ball put in a tremendous shot for Dunn to effect a magnificent save.

Dunn again saved grandly from Crompton, and a quick thrust by the Palace followed, and Birtley netted, but was given offside. Back they came again, and might have scored a thrilling save and

when the Town travelled speedily to the other end, Ball and Stephenson working well, Dunn also made another very fine save. An awkward shot by Stephenson was fisted behind for a corner, and this was cleared, and then Dunn brought down the house by a glorious save when Ball headed in from Stephenson's centre.

FOURTH FOR THE PALACE

The Palace went straight through, and BIRTLEY again netted, but Finlayson should have prevented the chance.

The Town forwards continued to play strongly, and Ball and Crompton each tested Dunn, and ten minutes from the end they scored, Stephenson breaking through and centreing for BALL to head a fine goal.

The Town attacked furiously, and Smith dribbled for seventy or eighty yards, and was on the point of shooting from well inside the Palace penalty area when an opponent blocked the shot. Dunn saved splendidly from Stephenson, and then the Palace had another turn, and with the Town players appealing for offside WOOD beat Coen.

The Town forwards tried hard, and Martin again tried the abilities of Dunn, but the end came:

PALACE	5
LUTON	1

PLAYERS

Coen kept goal well, and Mackey and Smith were good defenders, though they were severely tried by the pace of the Palace wingers. The Town half-backs were slow by comparison with the Palace attack, but that could well be understood.

There was not much to choose among the forwards, all playing well, but the team as a whole was not so fast and did not position so well as usual.

For the Palace Wilde played well as a third back, rarely leaving Ball; Dunn was a splendid goalkeeper, and had fully as much work as Coen. The backs were hard tacklers and kickers, and the flank halves were worriers. The forwards played fast and clever football, keeping the game open, and shooting well.

The Palace deserved their success on the day's play.