

PAYNE SCORES THIRD HAT-TRICK

FIREWORKS DISPLAY AT LUTON

By A. J. Webb

Luton 4, Watford 1

FIREWORKS at Luton, Football fireworks and the Guy Fawkes variety. Every time the home team scored someone threw a lighted squib on to the field, and when Payne completed his hat-trick they fell faster than at a Crystal Palace display.

How they idolise Payne at Luton! "Good Old Joe" is on everybody's tongue as soon as he gets anywhere near the ball and, whatever the result, so long as Payne scores everyone is happy.

This frenzy of hero-worship is almost on par with the faithless fervour of converts at a Revivalist campaign and yet, to a great extent, he is well worth it, for there is no better shot in the whole League. His record of 15 goals, including three hat-tricks, in nine matches speaks for itself.

Only his deadly accuracy gave Luton the spoils, for although the rest of the line worked hard their shooting, particularly Stephensons, was sadly at fault. Also, during the first half hour, the home team played some awful stuff.

Defence Default

Passes went astray, players were dispossessed with childish ease, and the defence were about ten minutes late with their tackling. Watford were so well on top that if anyone had suggested that Luton would have won 4-1 he would have been clamped in a strait-jacket.

Walters, Barnett and Devan put in innumerable shots that called for all Dolman's ingenuity and when Barnett at last did beat him after about 20 minutes it looked like the beginning of a rout; for Luton gave no sign of smarting under the setback and W. Davies delighted the thousands of Watford supporters with some fine wing play.

Then came Luton's partial revival, when Ball, during their third attack, barged his way between Armstrong and O'Brien to beat McLaren from 18 yards, but shortly afterwards there came an incident that threatened to upset Luton completely.

Nelson, their brilliant captain, cut his tongue during a tackle, and the loss of blood and nausea made him a mere passenger.

He did not turn out with the rest of the team in the second half but came on the field ten minutes late, after having had three stitches put into the cut, which ran down the centre of his tongue for an inch and a half.

Watford's Shock

He was still obviously ill, and had not the rest of the team produced that amazing reserve of stamina it would have meant Luton's eclipse. They were a different team altogether, and Watford had the biggest shock of their lives.

Luton, moreover, might have had two penalties, one for hands and another for a foul by McLaren on Payne. In the latter case, however, the ball must have been out of play, but at any rate McLaren received a very severe wiggling from the referee.

This one incident apart, the game was played in splendid spirit considering the circumstances.

Hundreds of spectators climbed to the roof of the stand and hundreds more were accommodated outside the enclosure, but the gate of 20,569, with receipts more than £1,200, was not a record.

Luton.—Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hodge, Payne, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Watford.—McLaren; O'Brien, Woodward; Morgan, Armstrong, Reed; Davies (W.), Barnett, Walters, Devan, Hurst.

PAYNE DOES IT AGAIN

LUTON SUBDUE WATFORD

Luton Town 4 Watford 1

UNORTHODOX methods of Watford's attack upset the machinery of Luton's defence, and there was such determination and vigour in the onslaughts that frequently defenders were standing almost agape at the temerity of players who never bothered about position.

When Devan scored for Watford he bobbed up in the inside-right position, whereas Barnett had been dodging players near the flag on the left. There was more danger to Dolman's charge than to McLaren's, especially as Nelson received such a nasty blow from an opponent's head that he was stumbling about with blood pouring from his mouth.

Stern tackling by Watford compelled Luton to relinquish their close methods, and it was by swinging the ball about that they equalised, Ball tricking the backs and sending home a terrific shot.

Nelson did not turn out immediately after half-time. When he came on it was just in time to see Payne rush past the backs and crack in a drive that left McLaren helpless.

From this point Watford had to fight tooth and nail to prevent goals piling up. First Stephenson and then Ball struck the posts. It was Payne, however, who rose superior to all the vigorous defence. He collared passes from Ball and Hodge and turned each into a goal.

McLaren's goalkeeping was good enough for any side, in spite of the goals against him. O'Brien also played magnificently, and so did Armstrong, in spite of the chasing that Ball caused the tall pivot. Barnett and Devan were the best of Watford's forwards.

Luton's team work was again splendid, and Payne's hat-trick was made possible by the all-round co-operation fore and aft. After wavering a little early on, the defence settled down, and it would be an injustice to any to single out individuals, though, perhaps, Fellowes should come in for special praise.

Luton: Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Hodge, Payne, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Watford: McLaren; O'Brien, Woodward; Morgan, Armstrong, Reed; Davies (W.), Barnett, Walters, Devan, Tinklin.