

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 fathomless 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 Stephenson, 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.