

NICHOLAS CLINCHER

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By JACK WELLING Luton 0 Crystal Palace 1

PALACE kept up with the promotion hunters but the way they performed against moderate Luton will not strike fear into their rivals.

Palace may be near the top of the Second Division but the entertainment was strictly Second rate.

If they do get promoted Palace will have to produce more goals than they have recently, although Luton boss David Pleat reckons they will stay in the First Division.

It's true Palace produced most of what little football there was. But they are riding to promotion on their powerful defence which has let in only five goals in the last 14 games.

"They are very difficult to beat," said Pleat. "They support each other so well."

The trouble is, Palace are badly missing the striking power of £200,000 Mike Elwiss, who will have a fitness test with a run out in the reserves against Norwich on Wednesday.

Manager Terry Venables also admitted that he could make a move to sign another striker before Thursday's transfer deadline.

Palace's goal—when it came—was a good one. The talented Murphy, who battled away in midfield, followed through after Luton's Carr and Donaghy had collided with each other and let the ball run free.

CHARGE

Murphy swung the ball out wide to Nicholas who turned Price and then moved across goal before cracking the ball into the net.

Murphy later sent a big dipper on target after Findlay had come out of his goal. The ball grazed the bar and landed on the top of the net.

A cracking, 35-yard pile-driver from Hinshelwood also thudded against the post to underline that Palace were in charge.

Luton came into the game more in the second half when West came on to boost the efforts of Aizlewood.

But only the hard-working Hatton really caused Palace much trouble—especially when he nipped in to beat Sansom to a ball rolled out by Burridge and drove it into the side netting.

LUTON: Findlay 6—Stephens 7, Turner 6, Donaghy 6, Price 6—Hill 6, Carr (w'drn) 5, *AIZLEWOOD 8—Taylor 6, Hatton 7, Stein 5. Sub.: West 6.
CRYSTAL PALACE: Burridge 6—Hinshelwood 7, Gilbert 6, Cannon 7, Sansom 7—Nicholas 6, Kember 7, *MURPHY 8—Walsh 6, Swindiehurst 7, Hilaire 7.

Ref.: M. Baker (Wolverhampton)