

A DEPUTY SCORES 10 GOALS!

Luton Gamble That Came Off

PAYNE BREAKS RECORD IN DEBUT AS LEADER

By FRANK POXON

Luton 12 Bristol Rovers 0

THERE was football drama in excelsis at Luton yesterday.

The position was this. Luton, at the top of the Southern Section, were fighting desperately to keep that position, and they knew they were up against strong opposition teams who were fighting as hard as themselves to gain the status of the Second Division.

Should there be a "gamble"? That was the question.

There was a conference of directors and one bold spirit said: "Why not play Payne at centre-forward on Easter Monday against Bristol Rovers?"

THE PLUNGE TAKEN

There was a gasp of astonishment and then two or three directors said: "Why not?"

Yes, why not? True, Payne was a reserve and a half-back at that, but—well, why not? The plunge was taken and Joe Payne was played yesterday as leader of the attack. He did moderately well—I am sure you will agree!—for he scored ten goals! And Payne had never before played centre-forward for Luton's first team.

What a debut! It was a debut unprecedented in the long history of Soccer, for a man making his first appearance at centre-forward in a League side to score ten goals.

A MODEST HERO

He was very modest about it all after the match. He said to me: "It would be silly on my part to say that it was all luck, for I do believe I played well. I am a very happy fellow today. But please give your praise to Stephenson, who 'made' nearly all our goals."

That was a just comment, for Stephenson was indeed the "universal provider."

He is sturdy, he is fast and he plays for his side and not for himself. To

me, yesterday, he looked an international all over. He is a real team man and quite unselfish.

But what an odd thing that Luton have been "entertaining an angel unawares" in Payne. For myself, I just can't understand it. If Payne is not a first-class centre-forward, I am no judge at all. True, many chances were made for him, but he was always "there."

TALE OF THE GOALS

Luton scored two very good goals in the first half-hour. Payne got the first with a shot which gave Ellis no chance, and Roberts got the second. The prelude to this second goal was a shot from Stephenson, which Ellis parried but could not clear.

The third goal was similar to the second in that Stephenson's shot led up to it; in this case it was Payne who put on the finishing touch. Two or three minutes later Payne got the fourth goal and completed his hat-trick.

The match was well won and lost at half-time, but just to make sure Payne completed a sequence of seven goals in a row and Martin completed the scoring.

A TEAM INSPIRED

Martin once bundled Ellis and the ball into the net, a perfectly good goal from a fair charge, but the referee held that Payne had scored before the charge.

Luton were now playing like a team inspired and Payne could do no wrong. He was living his "moment"—and how he lived it!

Payne is a native of Bolsover. I think he may be a "native" of England's XI. before long. He is a real centre-forward with tremendous dash and a sure shot in each foot. He stands 5ft. 11in. and weighs 12st. Yes, and when a chance comes along his brain is packed in ice.

Luton: Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Godfrey; Rich, Martin, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.

Rovers: Ellis; Pickering, Preece; Wallington, Murray, Young; Barley, Hartill, Harris, Houghton, Crisp.