

LUTON THE ARTISTS

A Sharp Lesson For The Reading Side

By IRON DUKE

Luton4 Reading0

LUTON are shaping well for the promotion narrowly missed last season and in this game they made old rivals from Reading look a mediocre eleven. Payne, of ten goals fame, may be the idol of the Luton crowd, but he was just a Payne in the neck to Reading. It was Payne who scored a hat-trick for the Hatters, and the team from beginning to end declared themselves to be a far more superior combination. There is something seriously wrong with the Reading team. Mr. C. B. Duguid, the club's vice-chairman, told me they had eight men sick and injured and were employing four reserves; but even that does not wholly excuse their utter failure. The Luton men, playing swift and accurate football, were streets ahead. Payne was deadly near goal, but the whole front line spelled continual danger to Reading.

The first half was the most thrilling I have seen this season, Luton supplying all the thrills. Ball distributed the ball so well that all the forwards might have been moving on ball-bearings.

DEFENCE PULLED UP

In the fifth minute Hodge and Payne, with splendid understanding and a swift interchange of positions, disordered the opposing defence, and the fact that the Reading backs pulled up to appeal for offside made it easier for Payne to score. The Reading defence at this time was most erratic, and the wildness of their kicking is indicated by the fact that four times the ball went sailing over the stand.

At the end of ten minutes Stephenson, with a hard ground shot, scored from a free kick 30 yards out. Thirteen minutes later Payne nipped in to Stephenson's centre too quickly for Whittaker's dive and got the third goal, with the Reading defenders all at sea.

So it went on, with the Luton men doing pretty well what they liked and completely bewildering Gregory, Done and company.

If the second half was tamer it was because Luton eased up, but they never lost their superiority, and 16 minutes after the resumption Payne turned an accurate corner kick from Stephenson into the net.

WORKED LIKE A MACHINE

Although Reading, mainly through Allen, McGough and Robertson, came nearer to scoring in this closing half, they have no cause for complaint at a blank record. They were lucky to get off so lightly.

It is hard to single out Luton men for praise when the whole 11 worked as a machine. Their greatest asset is their understanding team work, and I should imagine them to be a very happy and unselfish combination. Ball never kept the ball if a colleague was better placed, and Payne was the first to wave acknowledgments to the wing men who had helped with his goals.

That Rock of Gibraltar, Nelson, is surely the most confident half-back in the Southern Section. With the utmost nonchalance and ease he repeatedly broke up the Reading attacks and he dominated the field.

It is merciful to say little of Reading except that Robertson was their best man, tackling and plying his forwards with courage that never diminished. Allen and McGough with better support might have accomplished more, but the halves, pestered by the fleet Luton men, were unable to help.



Joe Payne, of Luton