

TOWN'S ODD GOAL DEFEAT AT STOCKPORT

DEFENCE NEARLY WINS A POINT

By CHILTERN

STOCKPORT COUNTY	2
Smailes, Oxley	
LUTON TOWN	1
Dawes	

STOCKPORT—McDonough; Jenkinson, Jones (G); Titterington, Jones (L), Still; Oxley, Rice, Mantle, Kennedy, Smailes.
LUTON—Coen; King, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellowes; Parris, Hancock, Dawes, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee—Dr A W Barton, Repton.

LUTON TOWN MET WITH DEFEAT in their first match in the Second Division, and, on the day's play, their opponents, **STOCKPORT COUNTY**, deserved to win. However, the Town were weakened by the absence of Payne, who was taken ill during the journey, and how much this contributed to the loss of the points is difficult to tell.

WHAT WE DO KNOW, is that the forward line never reached anything like its form of last season, and that Payne's absence probably accounted for it. The line was ragged, and rarely looked dangerous. There was no one who was able to make a lone run through the defence so that the offside tactics of the home side could be defeated.

THE FORWARDS WERE CAUGHT IN THE TRAP time and again, and they proved easy prey for a sound defence. Roberts and Parris failed to touch their normal form, and Hancock was the best of the forwards. He hustled about to some purpose, and did not spare himself from start to finish.

DAWES DID WELL UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, but he received little support. It was not for the lack of trying that he did not get more than one goal, and I admired his pluck. Stephenson was given few passes that were really workable, but he was dangerous when properly fed.

OF THE HALVES, Nelson started shakily, but settled down to play a sterling game, and he gave Mantle no chance whatever. The tall centre-half was magnificent in defence, and he was backed up by two good flank halves in Finlayson and Fellowes. The former showed up the better, and he played wonderfully well after the interval.

COEN WAS THE REAL HERO OF THE MATCH, and he brought off some astonishing saves. On at least three occasions he cleared when it looked any odds on a goal, and his anticipation was sometimes uncanny. King looked after Smailes in capable fashion, and the little winger was given few opportunities to seek the limelight. Smith, although inclined to allow Oxley too much room, did well, and was as rugged as ever.

THE HARD GROUND and the lively ball were against good football, but it was a game full of interest from start to finish. Play was fast, and both sides stuck the pace well. Stockport had much the better of the first-half exchanges, and the Town had to defend very hard to keep them out. Still, had their finishing been up to the standard of some of their



COEN

approach work, they must have been ahead at the interval.

THREE OR FOUR EASY CHANCES WERE MISSED, but Coen was always an insurmountable barrier. Just before the interval Hancock made the Town's first real scoring effort, and McDonough punched his high shot over the bar. It was only on rare occasions that the Town forwards caused the home defence any anxiety, and McDonough had an easy time.

STOCKPORT CONTINUED TO PRESS on the resumption, but it was Luton who scored first. Finlayson placed a free kick, awarded for a foul by Kennedy, well into the goalmouth. Dawes followed up and netted after McDonough had beaten out his first attempt. For a time Luton looked as if they might add to their lead but the County began to press again.

AFTER THEY HAD BEEN IN ARREARS FOR ELEVEN MINUTES, Stockport equalised. Mantle paved the way for the goal with a long run down the right wing. He took the ball well in before centring, and Smailes netted from close range. Parris should have restored the Town's lead shortly afterwards, but he failed rather badly.

IN THE CLOSING STAGES Stockport again exerted considerable pressure, and four minutes from the end they obtained the deciding goal. This again came as the result of a run on the right wing. This time it was **OXLEY**, and he shot from an acute angle, and the ball went just inside the post.