

Groves Injury Sets Arsenal New Problem

By **FRANK BUTLER**
ARSENAL 1, LUTON TOWN 0

ALTHOUGH Arsenal revenged the 6—3 hammering handed out at Luton on Boxing Day, Manager George Swindin faces 1959 with more problems. Vic Groves with a damaged right ankle joins the long list of Highbury injuries. This is almost sure to keep him out of the team to visit Leicester next Saturday.

Groves received a knock in the first 10 minutes, and had become lame before half-time when he moved out to the left wing. He was a passenger in the second half, and had to be helped into a car after the game.

"Vic will spend Sunday at home," Manager Swindin told me. "On Monday he'll be taken to the Royal Northern Hospital for X-rays. At the moment we can't tell what is wrong, but the ankle's badly swollen. It seems we are dogged by one injury after another to key players."

So, though Arsenal picked up a couple of points by the skin of their teeth on a muddy, treacherous pitch, I doubt if the 56,000 crowd—the largest of the day—were thrilled.

Len Julians, the new centre-forward from Leyton Orient, didn't set Highbury on fire, but he has helped Arsenal over a sticky patch of injuries.

Several Arsenal stars disappointed. Danny Clapton, for all his wizardry, spoiled his work by holding back when he should have been in the fray.

Bloomfield, after a hard-working first half, faded away, and Henderson suffered from a lack of good passes. Dodgin, restored at centre-half, gave a sound performance, but Docherty, switched to right-

half, made a number of surprisingly clumsy tackles.

Add to this the fact that Petts at left-half never really settled down although he worked so hard, and you have the reason why Arsenal did not command the game.

Under these circumstances I thought that Billy McCullough, a 22-year-old left-back who cost £6,000 from Portadown, made a most satisfactory League debut. He was not brilliant, but on an atrocious mud pitch he opposed the best forward of the match—Billy Bingham—and was not disgraced.

Minus their stars—Bob Morton, Gordon Turner, Sid Owen and Seamus Dunne—Luton nevertheless played the better football, but lost because they had so little zip near goal. It was only during a ten-minute spell before half-time that they looked like equalising.

Brown missed an open goal by hesitating and allowing Kelsey just sufficient split seconds to come out and block his drive. Almost immediately afterwards Brown had really bad luck when his header just skimmed the bar. And then Kelsey made a magnificent save from Gregory.

There was some luck about Arsenal's goal in the 22nd minute. Bloomfield was given a second chance after being slow to hit the ball into an open goal. From the rebound his shot stuck in the mud, but managed to slither a few inches over the line.