

SO-LUCKY LUTON STRUGGLE HOME

Exeter 1, Luton 2: by DOUGLAS HIRD

THERE were two gigantic bottles of champagne waiting in Exeter City's dressing-room, and chairman Mr. George Gillin personally served each player with a glass after the game. But it was the wine of defeat that the Devon side were tasting—a defeat even more bitter because it was so undeserved.

For even though they had to carry left-winger Gordon Dale as a limping passenger for 80 minutes of the game, they dictated and directed most of the play.

Dale sat in the dressing-room with his left knee bandaged and said: "I think I've torn a ligament. I knew I couldn't do very much as soon as Bingham tackled me after 10 minutes."

The rest of his team-mates soon realised he would be out of the game—and all the strain fell on right-winger Nelson Stiffle.

Stiffle played a great game. He gave Allan Daniel the run round every time he got the ball, and it was one of his cut-and-thrust runs which gave Exeter a 35th minute lead.

He cut in from his wing and cracked in a shot which looked a goal even before Daniel deflected it further past Baynham and into the net.

And from then on it looked like an Exeter win all the way. They pushed and probed relentlessly at the Luton goal and the only time

that the Hatters came into the picture was through occasional flashes from Billy Bingham and Bob Morton.

In fact, the First Division side were able to get going only in breakaways.

They got a goal in the 67th minute when Exeter 'keeper Lobbett blocked a Morton shot and the ball rolled loose. Inside-right Gordon Turner hammered it back in.

Twenty minutes from the end he became two-goal Turner with a similar effort after Lobbett had dived to block a Tony Gregory shot from near the penalty spot.

But between these goals Luton were still struggling. It seemed that all they could hope for was to take Exeter back to Kenilworth-road on Wednesday night.

Part-time inside-right Graham Rees and centre-forward Jack Wilkinson were Exeter's spearheads, but when it came to the last vital move they just couldn't beat Baynham.