

CONFIDENCE BOOSTER FOR CUP-TIE

LUTON TOWN 4, FULHAM 1

THESE are two welcome and invaluable points for the Town, but it is difficult to assess the margin of their improvement because the bottom was literally knocked out of this game in the 16th minute.

Then, with Fulham leading by the only goal, bearded Jimmy Hill was led off with damaged knee ligaments which are variously estimated to keep him out of the game for between three and six weeks.

There are times when a team so sorely handicapped can overcome it, but not on the muddy morass that was the Kenilworth-road pitch this afternoon.

Slowly, but surely, Fulham were worn down into the thick mud and the Town could have given their goal average a much better boost than this, had they made the most of their scoring chances.

This could be a considerable confidence booster for next week's Cup Tie, but I do not think that officials will blind themselves to the fact that there are still problems to be faced.

Decision of Manager Sid Owen to keep in Bob Morton at inside-left was amply justified in this difficult going and he was always playing strongly and had what was probably his best match since he switched to inside forward.

The fact that he scored was encouraging, as was the fact that four forwards in all got their names into the scoring list.

Chances were missed, particularly in the first half, but Fulham's reserve goalkeeper, Hewkins, had a great day.

Curiously, his greatest tormentor in the second half was Pacey who had the best part of a dozen shots from 20 yards range and was quite the outstanding figure produced by this match.

On the basis that England inside-left Johnny Haynes was scarcely seen, John Groves did a magnificent job, but he tended to try too many slide-rule passes in conditions that called for a hefty kick at the ball.

Even so, the Town wing halves secured such a grip in the second half that the Town completely dominated the game and Fulham were scarcely in it as an attacking force.

What would have been the outcome had Hill not been injured can only be a matter of conjecture, but the plain fact is that they looked very dangerous, and Leggat in particular, in the first quarter of an hour.

In the end, the inevitable happened, despite some forward shortcomings, chief of which was another below par display by Gregory, and Brown, for all his hard work, still does not look the spearhead type of centre-forward the Town so badly need.

Attendance: 17,500