

MEREDITH'S GREAT HOME DEBUT

Burnley (2), 3; Luton Town 0.

THE pipes and drums of the Highland band at Turf Moor during the interval, and the after-the-game results of rivals Wolves and Spurs, were a cheery reminder that although, as the late Sir Harry Lauder used to put it, Burnley will have to "keep right on to the end of the road," it need not be a "tired and weary" affair as they chase league championship honours.

Indeed the 2,684 fans who were disappointed with Friday's display and stayed away on Saturday, missed a game that had none of the end-of-the-season, flavour, and in addition to netting three goals and registering two valuable points on the credit side, Burnley turned in a workmanlike—if not sparkling—performance.

In addition to that, the "first-team only" followers met, for the first time at home, 22-year-old Trevor Meredith—Burnley's smallest (in inches) professional, but a Cagney-like bundle of pocket dynamite with the guile of a Matthews-in-the-making.

He stamped his presence on this game to such a degree that Connolly was never missed, and that would have seemed unlikely at 3 p.m. on Saturday. Blending stocky assurance with a deceptive swing-and-sway advance which had Luton's defenders repeatedly wrong-footing themselves, he laid on Burnley's second goal for ROBSON. Then in the second half he gained a penalty, when "sandwiched" by the full-backs, in the dramatic style of a Potts or a McIlroy in their most stylish swallow-dive moments.

EXCELLENT CONTROL

With excellent ball control, intuitive positioning and placing of passes and the nerve to hold the ball, he exhibited only one weakness, and that was shared by his colleagues—a tendency to cross the ball just too far past the goalmouth. That minor criticism apart, he must have added considerable joy to the directors' box inhabitants.

POINTER on Saturday reached the heights by netting Burnley's first goal with a remarkably well-taken half-chance. Then he was plunged to the depths by an injury which brought that grimmest of all sights on a football field, a stretcher to carry him off.

Although it was good to see him return after the interval, if only as a "passenger," the episode was bound to throw the highly-gearred Burnley attack into difficulties.

His goal—in the 15th minute—came directly from a high clearance from Blacklaw. Pointer beat Pacey for position, chested the ball to his left foot and cracked it 20 yards hard and low into the corner of the net. Baynham dived desperately but a save was never "on."

"MAC" ON TOP FORM

Fortunately Jimmy McIlroy demonstrated a return to his best form, which, with the willing help of his colleagues, with Pilkington ever to the fore, kept the Luton rearguard under such constant pressure that four fouls came in as many minutes just after the interval. Referee Mr. A. Murdoch then "spoke his piece," which resulted in the defenders changing their tactics nearer to their first-half sportsmanlike display—allied to a desire to kick for touch more reminiscent of a rugby game.

"Mac" delighted the crowd with his performance, indeed he seemed to delight himself, spraying passes which cut the Luton defence to ribbons, taking the ball through, and crowning his display by disdainfully stroking the penalty kick past Baynham—as if neither he nor anyone else had ever missed a spot-kick.

This was Turf Moor fans' first glimpse of a new "M" formation—McIlroy and Meredith mystification—which should be seen again soon.

Critics of Robson (and what footballer doesn't meet critics in his time) would overlook his well-taken second goal in the 32nd minute and argue that he might have got others. He might—indeed 6-0 would have been no unfair reflection of Burnley's superiority—but when Dame Fortune turns her glance away, little goes right for any inside forward.

At the end of the game it was easy to recall that Luton have been sporting the bottom-of-the-league tag for months. But in the first five minutes Burnley's defenders were none too happy, with Cummings giving Blacklaw palpitations, until he decided to clear his lines himself. Then Miller had to concede a corner hurriedly and Blacklaw had to collect the ball right under the bar.

STYLISH

By the 11th minute not a Luton player was standing in Burnley's half, and from then onwards Burnley's rearguard dominated the game—with Elder even, at one time, coming almost to the penalty area to bang in a shot which rocketed only feet wide. Tommy Cummings seemed to have rolled back the years to the days when he was challenging for representative honours, and Miller and Adamson gained a stranglehold on mid-field affairs that the black-and-white-clad Luton men never managed to shake off.