

Luton's fate is soon sealed

Stoke 3 Luton 0 : by JAMES WILSON

STOKE CITY had their victory in the bag at the tenth minute of this drab game. At the point of no return 16-year-old Michael O'Hara, getting his League debut, made his first major slip in Luton's goal. It put a goal on a plate for Stoke's ebullient though patchy right winger Tony Bentley, who took it with an accurate right foot at close range.

That was the end of the trail for an almost unrecognisable Luton side. With eight changes and four key men absent injured, they were no match for Stoke.

With so many square pegs in round holes—and some holes with nothing in them at all — Sam Bartram's boys could not contain a side which, if not clever or classy, kept up a brisk prodding and probing.

Town's attack tried valiantly to hit back but their own deficiencies, plus City's strong defence, proved too much.

In the first half Luton had virtually no scoring chances—and even Stoke, with so much in their favour, were not impressive.

It was underlining the inevitable when Dennis Wilshaw, Stoke's ace goal-poacher, put Luton further behind in the 24th minute.

Goal No. 2, however, was another reminder that it was City's lucky day, for both O'Hara—a good

prospect in spite of his obvious Soccer immaturity — and John Groves were undecided who should cope with a centre swung over by Don Ratcliffe.

While they hesitated Luton were lost and Wilshaw netted from two yards.

City's luck extended into a second half in which a super. save by Jimmy O'Neill kept Billy Bingham's name off the score sheet.

Then Wilshaw scored the simplest goal of the match in the 65th minute.

Again O'Hara, who had been cheered earlier for some man-sized saves, slipped and flummoxed his colleagues.

Seamus Dunne tried to cover up with a hurried back pass but the ball instead of reaching the young goalkeeper put Wilshaw onside. And the Stoke skipper accepted the chance of a tap-in goal.