

GRIP WENT, BUT TOWN HELD ON

**LUTON TOWN 2,
ROTHERHAM UTD. 1**

FOR quite half this match at Kenilworth-road on Saturday, the Town seemed to be heading for another of those convincing victories of the pre-Christmas era.

Then came an astonishing falling away which brought them to the stage at which they had to struggle to keep their grasp on the two points which they needed so badly.

Throughout the first half, Rotherham's defence, on paper the strongest in the Division, looked strangely ill at ease against a Town forward line which could have obtained a greater first half output than two goals.

They came from McGUFFIE in the fifth minute when he ran on to a through pass from Turner and from FLEMING 24 minutes later when he showed great coolness in controlling a pass from McGuffie before leaving Ironside helpless.

McGuffie missed a couple of other likely chances but there certainly seemed to be no danger to the Town at the interval.

What seemed to bring about their loss of command was a goal five minutes after the resumption when KIRKMAN made no mistake from close range when presented with a chance by a mistake by Groves.

Had Houghton been a little quicker off the mark, Rotherham could have been level shortly after that and although there was not a great deal of potential danger from the Rotherham front line, the Town's lead hung by a slender thread.

What they badly needed was a goal to restore their confidence, but the nearest they came to it was when McGuffie struck a post and Ironside made a goal-line save from him from the rebound.

LOST CONTROL OF THE MIDDLE

Much of the change that came over the game could be traced to the fact that the Town lost control of the middle of the field after the Rotherham success, with both Pacey and Groves falling away considerably.

From McNally, Kelly and Bramwell, there was some whole-hearted, last ditch defensive play which usually looked good enough to keep the Town ahead and Baynham was a very safe last line of defence.

But the reduction in effectiveness did not lie solely in the half-back line because Fleming lost his touch after a very good first half and Cummins's main value lay in some rather isolated through passes.

Turner probed away in quite successful style, but needs more in the way of support than was forthcoming on this occasion, and had McGuffie's finishing really been lethal, he could have hit the headlines because his positional sense was keen enough.

This was the first sight the home fans had had of McCann in his new-found position on the wing, and he did well enough to bring encouragement for the future.

LUTON TOWN. — Baynham; McNally, Bramwell; Pacey, Kelly, Groves; McCann, McGuffie, Turner, Cummins, Fleming.

ROTHERHAM UNITED. — Ironside; Perry, Morgan; Lambert, Madden, Waterhouse; Kirkman, Weston, Sawyer, Houghton, Bambridge.

Referee.—H. G. New, Havant.
Attendance.—10,179.