

DISMAL LUTON CAN'T BLAME THE PITCH THIS TIME

Luton Town 0 Scunthorpe 0: by GRAHAM BUXTON

THE notorious Kenilworth-road pitch has often taken the blame for the poor football seen on it in the past. But the pitch could scarcely be blamed for this dreary exhibition. The real reason for the dull deadlock was that both forward lines lacked ball control and constructive ability.

With no maximum to the wage scale, one wonders for what salary most of the 10 forwards on view would qualify.

Both teams had excuses—Luton were hit by injuries to seven forwards and Scunthorpe were trying out two youngsters in Johnny Kaye and Arthur Thorpe.

But there just was not the basic skill to bring this game out of the doldrums, and it was noticeable that it was the "old hands," Barry Thomas and Joe Bonson for Scunthorpe and Alwyn McGuffie for Luton, who went nearest to the goals which looked like coming only on rare occasions.

Luton admitted the failure of their forward line 20 minutes from the end when the attack was switched completely and Bob Morton was brought up into the middle from right half.

But even the influence of this talented player failed to bring more bite to an attack that limped through the match like a dog with three legs.

Mike Dixon, whose first League game this was for 18 months, was

a complete failure and was switched to outside right well before the end.

Scunthorpe seemed well content to hold on to a point which they gained without trouble—thanks to the shortcomings of the Luton forward line and the soundness of their defence.

In the latter Barry Horstead stood out, but of the youngsters on view Derek Hemstead, a former ground staff boy, impressed most.

He was helped by the complete inability of Jim Fleming to finish off his clever midfield work . . . but Hemstead looks an excellent prospect.

What honours there are were mostly shared by the goalkeepers Ron Baynham and Joe Turner whose handling of the ball was impeccable but who were only rarely tested by direct shots.

John Bramwell stood out for his clever positional play and good use of the ball.