

£30,000 Knapp is worth every penny

● Tony Knapp gave a brilliant display against Luton. Does his efficiency make him the best centre half in the Second Division ?

By ALAN MANLEY

Luton Town ...1 Southampton 4

Southampton manager Ted Bates and I have at least one thing in common—distaste for the lunatic fringe who slow handclap at the least provocation.

There were two sessions of it when Luton were trailing 0—4, short but long enough to leave an unpleasant taste. Afterwards Mr. Bates said: "I was disgusted. What good do they think it does ?"

But if he was unhappy about that he was pleased with his team's display. "We're just about the best away team in the country . . . I wish we could get going like it at home," he said feelingly.

The game can be summed up

as a tale of two centre-halves, and George O'Brien. Southampton's Tony Knapp, £30,000 buy from Leicester, gave the best display I have seen this season, harnessing the defence into an efficient, confident machine and blotting out completely the dangerous Turner. He must be the best centre half in the Second Division.

Contrast Knapp with a hesitant Ronnie Cope (expensive buy from Manchester United), bear in mind the opportunism of lively Scot O'Brien and it's easy to see why Southampton won.

But although Luton manager Sam Bartram has his problems—this is their third consecutive League defeat—there is no cause for alarm, and he wisely wrote it off as "one of those days."

Goalchart. — Southampton : O'Brien (19, 34, 48), Penk (51). **Luton :** Turner (78).

Luton.—Baynham ; Reed, Bramwell ; Morton, Cope, Groves ; Walden, Ashworth, Turner, McKechnie, Fleming.

Southampton.—Godfrey ; Davies, Traynor ; Clifton, Knapp, Huxford ; Paine, O'Brien, Reeves, Mulgrew, Penk,