



● Inside-left Tommy McKechnie (second from right) crashes in a long-range shot to score Luton's third goal against Rotherham a minute before half-time at Kenilworth-road.

# 'KEEPER BLINKS AT LIGHTS AS LUTON SCORE DECIDER

Luton 4 Rotherham 3: by GRAHAM BUXTON

WHEN this all-action match ended, Luton manager Sam Bartram, who had spent the last 20 minutes on the trainer's bench, heaved a sigh of relief. Well he might, for the result was in the balance until the final kick. Yet Luton had been put two up in 15 minutes by Alwyn McGuffie and Harry Walden.

Rotherham, the best team to visit Luton this season, shrugged aside this adverse start and 14 minutes later were leading 3-2. Their brilliant attacking football, in which even full-backs Cassidy and Morgan joined, had Luton reeling.

After 17 minutes Brian Taylor beat Jim Standen to a through pass from Morgan and lifted the ball into the net.

In the 28th and 29th minutes Rotherham scored through Sawyer and Kirkman, whose point-blank shot was deflected into the net by McNally as the defender tried to clear.

Two minutes before half-time Tommy McKechnie snapped up a chance to put Luton level, and the stage was set for an exciting second-half struggle.

Tense it certainly was, but because the defences tightened up, although both teams launched heavy raids, a draw seemed very much on the cards.

An unfortunate mistake by goal-keeper Roy Ironside led to Luton securing the decider 18 minutes from the end.

Maybe the floodlights blinded him, but he fluffed a high centre from Dave Pacey and the dynamic Alec Ashworth was on hand to rush the ball through.

Rotherham chief Tom Johnson thought United were unlucky. And

there is no doubt the Luton crowd would have settled for a draw.

The merit of the match was shown by the fact that no one left before the end. And when the last whistle went there was applause for the players.

Luton still have an inside-forward problem. McGuffie, after his early goal, was scarcely in the game, and the club may be forced into the transfer market to fill the gap left by the enforced absence of Gordon Turner for at least six weeks.

Rotherham's speedy wingers, Webster and Taylor, gave McNally and Bramwell an uncomfortable afternoon, and nearly won the match. However, Alan Kirkman was the only colleague capable of reaping the full benefit of their work.

Luton's defence settled down after an uneasy first half, and this factor proved the deciding one. Rotherham, so vulnerable down the middle in the first half, also settled down afterwards, with Peter Madden dominating in the air.