

NEW BOY GOLDIE COULD BE ANSWER TO LUTON PROBLEM

Luton Town 2 Rotherham 3: by GRAHAM BUXTON

THESE are desperate days for Luton, whose gate of 8,664 was their lowest for an opening match in living memory. Nor was Luton's display calculated to bring back the missing fans, for they were haphazard in attack and none too certain in defence.

Not until they found themselves two goals down after 57 minutes through the opportunism of Alan Kirkman, who had snatched his first goal early on, did Luton show much fight.

Then, as if adversity made them desperate, they hit back with two goals from Jack Lornie and the stage was set for a much-needed revival.

But the ill luck that usually follows a struggling team now hit Luton. With 67 minutes gone, Hugh McIlmoyle, Rotherham's new signing from Leicester, ambled through a vainly appealing defence and nudged the visitors back into the lead.

Luton had the spirit to hit back and Dave Pacey, one of the few to hit his normal form, was right out of luck with a shot that crashed against the bar.

And fortune was against them when Gordon Turner was pulled down in the penalty area and the referee waved on play.

Luton's limitations were cruelly exposed, but Rotherham, a useful side on this showing, could trouble the best in the Second Division.

For one thing their defence is big and solid, and in 20-year-old left-half Roy Lancaster they seem to have a real star in the making.

In attack, too, they showed speed and cohesion, with McIlmoyle dis-

playing some of the form that earned him a Cup Final place with Leicester.

Wingers Don Weston and Ian Butler showed greater ability to hold the ball and to use it than their Luton counterparts, Harry Walden and Jim Fleming.

Walden looked dangerous at times, but the biggest disappointment was Turner, who seemed to have lost his old goal touch.

A new Luton star may be in the ascendancy in centre-forward Jim Goldie, who looked most impressive in his home debut despite limited support and close marking.

Goldie could be a match-winner, and another happy factor for Luton was the return to form of Lornie, who was of McIlmoyle's rivals at Leicester.

His two goals were well taken and he was unlucky with another fierce drive.

Maybe Luton have reason to feel unlucky, but there are many problems to be tackled. Even the defence was jittery under pressure, possibly because Bob Morton was missing, and his deputy, young Alan Clarke, lacks experience of League football.