



● Luton's white-shirted Ron Davies waits in vain for a chance to threaten the Walsall goal as 'keeper Malcolm White soars to collect a high centre at Kenilworth-road.

GORDON TURNER LONG SHOT SHOWS LUTON THE WAY

Luton 1 Walsall 0: by GRAHAM BUXTON

BOTH managers, Bill Harvey of Luton and Bill Moore of Walsall, were in agreement afterwards that it was a pity their teams had to meet in the first match of the season. Indeed, it seemed as if both could not forget that they were no longer fighting for points to avoid relegation.

The result was a game in which defences held a complete domination. There was a great deal of negative football that was not to the liking of the fans, and Walsall's continued use of the off-side trap was an irritation.

Not only that, but it put the Luton forwards off their game, so that what smoothness there was about their play was confined to midfield.

When they reached the penalty area they either found themselves offside or were blotted out by Walsall's experienced defence.

Ron Davies, watched by a Middlesbrough scout, had a thin time against McPherson and made only two serious scoring attempts in the match.

Ironically, the most effective Luton forward was Gordon Turner who would have left during the summer had there been a reasonable offer for him.

He it was who scored the decisive goal after 26 minutes when from the edge of the penalty area he sent the ball well wide of Malcolm White.

The pass was laid on by Harry Walden who was unpredictable and

spent much of his time running into trouble.

Like Luton, Walsall were poor in front of goal and their greatest hope of rescuing a point seemed to lie in Jimmy Fell who was right out of luck after 61 minutes with a shot that cannoned against a post.

Walsall were handicapped to some extent by an injury to Hodgkisson who had been their most effective forward, and they had another stroke of bad luck four minutes from the end.

This time McPherson, who had been a great bulwark, injured his head in a duel with Davies and was carried off on a stretcher. He soon recovered and was able to travel home with the team.

But the issue had been more or less decided, because with the tall Gordon Fincham dominating the middle, Luton defence exercised as great a stranglehold as did that of Walsall.

Luton's problem now is to find an attack that is better balanced.