



● Luton right-back Alan Daniel (left) watches anxiously as Reading forwards Peter Shreeves (right) and Alan Morris attack at Elm Park.

READING AND LUTON TOO ANXIOUS NOT TO LOSE

Reading 1 Luton Town 1: by PETER BROOKE

RREADING scored their first goal of the season, against a weak and slow-moving Luton side. It had taken them 186 minutes, in three matches. This form does not promise much this season.

Both sides shaped attractively enough in the early stages. But after Luton scored, 20 minutes later, the long-suffering supporters were subjected to a dreary and futile exhibition of football.

In between the goals there were moments when even embittered cynics were agreeing "don't write off Reading just yet."

There were occasional flashes, smart inter-passing moves, which suggested that Reading might be a powerful force when at full strength.

But Reading played such a weird mixture of half-defensive and half-attacking football that it bemused themselves and spoiled all prospects of them scoring the winner.

More dismal

And Luton? They often looked a better side, but sometimes their showing was even more dismal. Occasional promising moves recalled their days of the First and Second Divisions, but they were only flashes.

Soon they returned to the despairing football in which defence and the saving of a point always seemed more important than seeking to play attractively, or even playing to win.

Not every player seemed to be playing at full speed.

Reading's goal knocked them sideways, and a stronger attack would

have slammed a couple more within five minutes of Peter Kerr hammering in the rebound from Jim Wheeler's free kick.

Luton's shining star was left-half David Pacey, who worked tirelessly to keep his forwards moving. He pioneered many of their midfield moves, but, with centre-forward Ron Davies blotted out by Dick Spires, the Luton attack showed little initiative.

Danger came only from right winger Harry Walden, but he saw little of the ball, and many of his centres were wasted.

Pacey laid on the move which split Reading's defence after 27 minutes, and allowed Salisbury to score the equaliser.

Right-half Maurice Evans controlled much of the midfield play for Reading, but Rodney Thornhill was not a force at left-half. He still lacks experience.

John Petts, relegated to the reserves, still looks the man to provide the vital link between attack and defence. When he returns, with Surrey cricketer Ron Tindall, and when forward Fred Jones is fit, Reading could be a force.