

Reading's 10 scare Luton

Luton 2, Reading 1

ON a pitch more suitable for skating these teams did well enough to keep Luton's smallest crowd of the season reasonably well entertained.

But if Luton took the points, the honours went to Reading, who were reduced to 10 men after 25 minutes when Meldrum limped off with a badly sprained ankle after falling heavily on the iron-hard surface.

When that happened they were a goal down through Turner, who was brought in as an emergency right-winger at the last minute.

Strangely Reading played more effectively when reduced to 10 men because Luton made hard work of what should have been a comparatively easy task. When McKechnie put them two up four minutes after half-time. Luton seemed destined to have a comfortable victory, but gallant Reading had other ideas.

They hit back hard, and Webb, who had always been dangerous, nipped between a hesitant defence to head through a centre from Jones. After that Luton's lead always seemed precarious because they failed to make the best use of their scoring chances.

Their defence was uneasy against

the quick thrusts of the Reading forwards of whom Webb represented the main threat.

Lucky escape

63/64

Indeed, Webb got the ball in the net again but the whistle had gone for a foul on Fincham, but it was a marginal decision and Luton were lucky to escape.

In the conditions it was difficult to assess the strength of Luton's much-changed forward line, but in O'Rourke, who arrived from Chelsea three weeks ago, they seemed to have a young leader who will increase their goal output.

Four times he went near to marking his first appearance with a goal, and he showed the enthusiasm the Luton attack has been so sadly lacking.

Reading could have snatched a point and no one could have complained. In the end their handicap told but Luton were reduced to holding on to the ball in the closing minutes to keep two points which they so badly needed.

Luton.—Tinsley; Morton, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, McGuffie; Turner, Reid, O'Rourke, McKechnie, Smith.

Reading.—Wilkie; Walker, Meldrum; Evans, Spiers, Thornhill; Wheeler, Norton, Grant, Webb, Jones.

Referee.—S. B. Stoakes (Mansfield).