

Desperate Luton fight in vain

Bournemouth 3 Luton 1: by FRANK WALTON

TWO goals by Alan O'Neill helped Bournemouth keep up their promotion challenge. They were O'Neill's first goals for his new club since he joined them from Plymouth. And the first seven minutes before half time, couldn't have been better timed.

For although the sides were then level, Luton were again looking capable of continuing their new-found habit of upsetting the top clubs.

In fact, had leader John O'Rourke been cooler in front of goal they would have been leading. But with only David Best in his way O'Rourke stabbed a cross from Reid into the crowd via the top of the bar from three yards out.

Then came O'Neill's goal and it seemed to knock the heart out of the opposition. It was made by ex-Luton player John Groves.

Earlier Dennis Coughlin, the Bournemouth leader, had made it 11 goals in 11 games when he headed in a Crickmore cross after eight minutes.

But the lead was short lived. Two minutes later John Reid equalised when he scored his first goal for Luton since joining them from Northampton. His powerful left-foot shot from 25 yards gave Best little chance.

After this the home defence, with

the exception of new signing Dick Keith looked decidedly shaky.

Gater in particular was kept at full stretch by the lively O'Rourke. But in the end O'Rourke waited in vain for the one fatal slip which could help him to a goal.

Despite their half-time lead Bournemouth always looked in danger of losing a point. Luton threw everything into a series of desperate sorties in the second half.

It was a policy which was nearly rewarded when Bournemouth skipper Farmer cleared off the line from Pacey.

It was left to O'Neill to put the result beyond doubt when he evaded despairing tackles to ram the ball in with a minute to go.