

Luton relax and slip to defeat

Luton 1 Exeter 2 : by GRAHAM BUXTON

LUTON TOWN, for the first 45 minutes, almost toyed with the weakest opposition seen at Kenilworth Road for a long time. But they became so involved with their own intricacies that they neglected the all-important final touch of putting the ball into the net.

When John O'Rourke gave them the lead, after nine minutes, everything appeared to be going according to plan, especially as the Exeter defence seemed likely to fall to pieces at any moment.

But well as Luton worked the ball in midfield, they displayed little idea in front of goal.

Reasonable chances were allowed to slip by and Peter Shearing should not have been allowed the opportunity to save spectacularly on three or four occasions.

It seemed after the interval that Luton could clinch matters whenever they felt inclined, but a rude awakening came when Exeter suddenly began to play with a purpose that they had never even hinted at before.

Then Wilf Carter snatched an equaliser after 54 minutes and from then on Exeter played like a team transformed. Luton, on the other hand, deteriorated badly.

Arnold Mitchell and Des Anderson took a complete grip in midfield, snuffing out Luton's attempted raids in their infancy.

Eric Welsh and Graham Rees worried the home defence with strong raids on the wings and Dermot Curtis and Carter suddenly became a twin spearhead menace.

This combination brought the winner 14 minutes from the end, when Curtis raced up to force a Carter centre over the line.

As an attacking force Luton scarcely functioned at all in the second half and O'Rourke was left

unsupported by inside forward Tommy McKethnie and John Reid who seemed over-preoccupied with defence.

Just why Luton did not go all out to increase their narrow advantage was a mystery but their wing halves, Dave Pacey and Mark Lownds, were much below par.