

NOT VINTAGE BUT VERY EFFECTIVE

65/66

LUTON TOWN 4, HALIFAX TOWN 1

WITHOUT much doubt at all, and in the face of considerable handicap, the Town expressed their superiority over Halifax in the clearest fashion this afternoon.

Yet, it was not one of their vintage displays, even though they scored four goals for the third time in the last four matches, bringing their output during that period before their own fans to 17.

It was not difficult to explain why some of the sparkle of the earlier matches was missing. For one thing, Town were deprived very early on of the effective services of French, who brilliantly caught the imagination of the supporters on his home debut a fortnight ago.

He was involved in an unfortunate collision with team mate Thomson, and did not come back for the second half, being replaced by Rivers. In addition, Tony Read was also bothered by a leg injury received in the latter part of the first half.

Town's manager Mr. George Martin told me after the match that Read has ligament trouble and may not be fit for the Cup-tie at Romford next Saturday.

In the circumstances, and in view of the spoiling tactics adopted by Halifax, and the rough and ready tackling, the Town did well to achieve such a good result.

From the start, Town were clearly the more skilful side, with a better build up in midfield and more thrust in front of goal. But for some splendid saves by Raynor, who foiled O'Rourke several times, their victory would have been even more pronounced.

O'Rourke was always a threat, though he did not receive the best of service, and Whittaker, too, was always menacing.

Fry was something of a mixture between the brilliant and the mediocre.

I thought that the recall of Woods to centre half was not only well timed, but effective, because he brought added soundness, and there was seldom the ominous gap down the middle that we have been seeing too frequently.

In the main, the rearguard did a very adequate job. Occasionally, Thompson and Jardine were bothered by the wingers, who were the best of the Halifax front line, but it was not until the last quarter of an hour that the defence fell into real trouble. Then, for some reason, the covering went awry, only one goal was conceded, and that was too late to matter.

Altogether it was a very satisfactory result for Town. The attendance soared to 7,879, easily the best of the season, and an indication that continued success, and goals that the team are scoring, will bring the crowds back in even larger numbers.