

BETTER FORM SHOWN BY THE TOWN FRONT LINE

Read shook Southport with first-minute goal

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, SOUTHPORT 0

GIVEN another chance after their disappointing showing the previous day, except that Fry was omitted, the Town forwards rehabilitated themselves to a quite considerable extent in their return match on Tuesday.

Certainly, in conditions that produced all sorts of problems and reduced attempts at accuracy to a matter of chance, they showed the determination and fighting spirit that had been lacking.

Conditions really were bad because the pitch although it had been rolled before the onset of the frost, remained bumpy and had to be heavily sanded during the morning in order for there to be a chance of play.

There could have been no more invigorating start to the Town's hopes of ending their bad patch than a goal inside the first minute.

And the man who scored it was READ who had been relegated to substitute in the previous match. Found in an open space by a pass by Harber, he simply thundered the ball into the roof of the net.

Apart from a long shot from Russell which Tinsley saved well, Southport did not pose many threats and after O'Rourke had shot wide from a good position, they increased their lead in the 22nd minute.

A mistake by Cairns let in FRENCH who came in purposefully and beat Reeves with a low shot that went in inside the far post for his first goal for the club. O'Rourke ran up to make sure, but the referee said the ball was a yard over the line before he reached it.

There were several escapes for the visitors, including a header by Read that went just over and a shot from O'Rourke that hit the bar. Rioch also made a couple of good attempts and a low cross by Whittaker was nearly forced over the line.

Much the same picture continued in the second half, with the Town doing the bulk of the pressure, but just not being able to force home their advantage.

Several times an awkward bounce prevented an accurate

finish and O'Rourke, Rioch and Read might have put on further goals.

A late spurt by Southport looked as if it might put them back into the game, but Tinsley risked injury by throwing himself first at the feet of Spence and then of Russell.

There was never any disputing the superiority of the Town who kept driving the ball forward effectively and they had a better appreciation of the conditions than had their opponents.

Southport were most dangerous when Russell was being allowed a certain amount of latitude as the

link-man in a 4-2-4 system, but later Rioch was detailed to snuff him out of the game and their scheme fell down after that.

In fact, Rioch's form in the two matches has been a revelation and he is an undoubted find for the left-half position.

There was a tightening-up at full-back where Jardine played much closer to Marshall than he did previously, with happy results, and Riddick shows every sign that he will achieve success in his new-found position.

Once again, Woods was cool and masterful and Reid was always busy in mid-field and always ready to cover where necessary.

Biggest improvement, though, was in attack with O'Rourke showing something like his best form and French thrilling the crowd in the second half with some dazzling runs.

Read is always useful to have around in the front line because he never fails to harass the opposing defence, while Harber's contribution was a major one, compared to that of the previous day. Maybe, Whittaker was not quite so successful, but he was always a potential danger.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Riddick, Jardine; Reid, Woods, Rioch; French, Read, O'Rourke. Harber, Whittaker.

SOUTHPORT: Reeves; Parker, Cairns; Peat, Molyneux, Barratt; Marshall, Alty, Russell, Spence, Smith.

Referee: K. H. Burns, Dudley. Attendance: 7,307.