

Luton leave challengers tottering

Luton 2, Darlington 0

THIRD Division football is looking more and more likely for this useful Luton team who are leaving a string of promotion aspirants tottering on their muddy turf.

Not that they had it easy against a tough Darlington team who did not spare themselves in the tackle. For 20 minutes or so Darlington looked a really slick combination moving the ball about sweetly in the thick mud.

However, they gradually became bogged down and never seemed to recover from a goal by Whittaker in the 23rd minute. It was O'Rourke, the subject of several bruising tackles, who laid on the chance. Whittaker might have had two more soon after that, and Luton became distinctly more penetrative.

There was plenty of fight about Darlington, but Luton had the edge in front of goal and the destination of the points was decided 25 minutes from the end.

Veterans star

Then Ratcliffe fouled O'Rourke, who flicked in Whittaker's free kick.

Such was the character of the tackling that it was a surprise that the referee did not take the name of any player until ten minutes from the end, when Peverell was booked for a kick at O'Rourke.

Earlier, Riddick had been led off with a knee injury and was replaced by Read, but that did not upset the Luton balance. Not that they ever had it easy, and it needed superlative saves by Ramage to prevent Cummings and McGeachie from putting Darlington not only back into the game but into the promotion stakes.

Best players on the field were the two veterans, Woods and Yeoman, who generalised their defences magnificently.

Darlington might have been more successful on better going, because there was no doubt that their machine became clogged by the mud which seemed to suit a Luton team that was weary at the end.

Luton: Ramage; Riddick, Jardine; Gibson Woods, Moore; Harber, Edwards, O'Rourke Reid, Whittaker (Subst.: Read.)

Darlington: Moor; Peverell, Keeble; Yeoman, Jacques, Ratcliffe; McGeachie, Hutchinson, Cummings, Sproates, O'Neill.

Referee: G. Martin (Whitchurch).