

BARREN SEQUENCE ENDED BY CLOSE WIN

Town were good value for it

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, CREWE ALEXANDRA 1

THAT worrying sequence of matches without a victory which stood at eight before this match at Kenilworth Road on Saturday was ended in rather more impressive style than the final score would indicate, to give more encouragement for the difficult programme which lies ahead.

Certainly, the margin in favour of the Town should have been greater, but once again they experienced some bad luck in their finishing, and in some instances the final thrust was just missing.

However, there was no possible room for doubt that they thoroughly deserved to collect these badly needed points, even if one very nearly got away from them with almost the last kick of the match.

Then there were visions of a repetition of what happened in the previous home game when, for once, the defence got itself into a tangle and, from point-blank range, Regan lifted the ball over.

Scarcely had the hearts of the Town fans ceased to flutter than the whistle went for the end.

Certainly, if Regan had scored, it would have been a grave miscarriage of justice because the Town, playing with much of the confidence in attack that has been lacking recently, were undoubtedly the better side and the one with the more constructive ideas.

EARLY GOAL FROM RIDDICK

They began as if they would annihilate the opposition, an impression that was confirmed in the eighth minute when RIDDICK ran into position to head a neat goal from a centre by Conboy.

However, Crewe were hard fighters, they funnelled quickly back into their own penalty area when danger threatened and certainly did not spare themselves in the tackle.

However, even these attri-

butes should not have saved them when a rousing drive by Whittaker beat Mailey and crashed against the bar. The ball rebounded into play, was booted upfield, and there was MATTHEWS closing in on it to beat Read with a great, rising drive.

SITUATION CHANGED

That changed the situation entirely, Crew perked up considerably and very nearly took a shock lead when another drive by Matthews topped the bar by inches.

However, the Town regained their touch in the second half when they would have had more goals than the one neatly headed by RIDDICK from Pleat's centre after 63 minutes, but for the agility and vigilance of Mailey.

Meanwhile, although one or two problems remain—chiefly those associated with the ability to improve the finishing, this was a refreshing performance by the Town.

In that he was cast in the link role, Riddick's goals came as something of a surprise but showed that he was reading the game intelligently, and he and Conboy did a splendid job in midfield.

RIOCH WAS OUT OF LUCK

In the pattern adopted by the Town, Thear and Rioch were the spearheads, with the latter, unlucky with his shooting at times, the more successful, and I was glad to see that the wingers were allowed to play in the old-fashioned style. Whittaker hit something like his best form, and Pleat, a late deputy for French, had quite a useful game.

With Slough allotted mainly a defensive role, not many gaps appeared in the rear-guard, and Moore again suggested that he can settle down at centre-half.

Thomson experienced some trouble with Matthews but was never anything but a whole-hearted trier, as was Jardine, who made some ambitious runs into attack that nearly paid off.

Read did everything that was asked of him, and there was certainly little he could have been expected to do about the shot that beat him.

LUTON T. — Read; Thomson, Jardine; Conboy, Moore, Slough; Pleat, Thear, Riddick, Rioch, Whittaker. Substitute: Yardley.

CREWE ALEXANDRA. — Mailey; Marshall, Cuthbert; Bradshaw, Barnes, Gannon; Harley, Archer, Regan, Mahony, Matthews. Substitute: King.

Referee. — C. H. Nicholls, Plymouth. Attendance 4,785.