

INJURY-HIT LUTON WIN POINT

by PETER GILL

Luton 1 Port Vale 1

NO ONE would have thought that Luton were striving for vital points to avoid having to apply for re-election.

Not only did they have no method, but the determination which one looks for most in a struggling team was missing.

Port Vale, a team of triers, were not much better because, although they had players of wider experience than most of those Luton possessed, they did not play to a constructive pattern either.

Luton's big handicap is that they have four first-team players on the injured list, and this has strained their resources.

Youngsters like the 18-year-olds Terry Adamson and Brian Johnson patently showed themselves as not ready, at least in these conditions of a hard, dusty pitch and a lively ball.

And there was nobody to hold the ball in midfield, which was aggravated when David Pleat, the link man, did not return after half-time because of injury.

Bad marking

Ron Wilson, one of the Vale's more experienced players, took advantage of some bad marking in defence to beat Ron Swan with a rising drive.

Goals always seemed unlikely and so it proved until the 69th minute. Then Freddie Jardine, Luton's longest-serving player and their best on this occasion, sent in a shot that Sharratt could only parry and substitute Alan Rivers prodded the ball in.

Vale made some tentative efforts, prompted mostly by Irish international Jimmy Hill, to regain the initiative but Luton's defence stood firm. Just once were they in danger and then Ron Georgeson missed a chance by failure to control the ball.

Outstanding in the strong Vale defence was 20-year-old Terry Alcock, but the experience of Harry Poole, Terry Miles, and John Ritchie was always ready to help him.