

Luton can thank young Rioch

Luton 1 Hartlepoons 0: by PETER GILL

A STROKE of genius by young inside-left Bruce Rioch won Luton a match of which they had made very heavy weather. Hartlepoons gave an early indication that they had come for a point to preserve their unbeaten record.

Whenever the slightest danger threatened they funnelled as many as eight players back into their penalty area, and Luton, lacking the thrust of the injured Rodney Green, seemed to be battling against a brick wall.

It was stalemate at the end of a first half in which such chances as Luton created were missed

through the slovenly finishing of Ray Whittaker, Keith Allen, and Micky Brown.

Rioch's goal 11 minutes after half-time brought a refreshing breeze to sweep away the defensive cobwebs. He picked up a pass midway in the Hartlepoons half and scored at the end of a brilliant 30 yards run.

Soon afterwards, Allen saw a header bound for the net hit John Gill and be deflected wide.

Hartlepoons, poor in attack, yet had two chances to save the game. Both fell to Jim Mulvaney, in the space of a minute a quarter of an hour from the end.

Each time he failed lamentably, his first effort striking the leg of goalkeeper Tony Read and his second, a header, soaring over the bar.

Which was poor reward for Albert Broadbent, the best schemer on view. His prompting met with remarkably little response.

Ernie Phythian could not escape the close attention of stalwart Luton centre half Terry Branston.

But the outstanding defender was John Moore, who was by no means certain of his Luton place when the season began, but who has taken his chance with great ability.