

TOWN OPEN UP DIV IV GAP

By **ROGER DUCKWORTH**

Luton Town 3, Darlington 1

URGED ON throughout by the massed choir behind the Oak Road goal, Luton Town surged into a three-point lead at the top of Division Four last night.

Luton, in fact, were so much on top that the score belies all the facts. Darlington's only goal was an own goal by John Moore three minutes from the end.

Letting Luton score for them was the only way the North-erners ever looked like beating Town goalkeeper Tony Read, who had his easiest match of the season.

Despite their complete superiority, Town were unable to score with the ease they retained possession, and on at least half a dozen occasions Darlington heads, bodies, legs and boots were stuck out despairingly to stop certain-looking goals on the line.

It was very frustrating. But both players and the fans can be consoled somewhat by the standard of the Town's goals — especially the first and last.

Arsenal scouts

In the sixth minute Bruce Rioch raised the eyebrows of two Arsenal scouts in the stand when he scored a goal that was all his own.

Sizing up a situation quickly, he found an open space deep in his own half and called to goalkeeper Tony Read for the ball. Read was quick to give it him, and Rioch turned, set off at top speed, hurtled past four defenders, and finished off a 60-yards dash with a goal from near the edge of the box.

I am only sorry that there were not more there to see it. With the club expecting the biggest crowd of the season, the gate of 13,948 can be regarded as a little disappointing, though most Fourth Division clubs would be delighted to attract so many people.

Luton's best football came in the first-half when their attack combined sweetly. Several of the Hatters' moves involved the whole front line and were a real pleasure to watch.

In the 39th minute Keith Allen put Luton further ahead after a Buxton shot had been blocked. This goal followed a lot of hard luck by Alan Slough, Ian Buxton and Graham French.

The barrage continued into the second half, and in one fantastic scramble Buxton, Allen and Whittaker all had

close-range shots blocked on the line by desperate lunges from Thompson and Keeble.

Play became aimless for periods in the second-half as Luton limited their attacks to long punts down the middle which were chased usually by Buxton or Allen.

Fearful crack

Skipper Terry Branston had accepted a fearful crack on the head in the first half, but elected to carry on. Freddie Jardine was not so lucky in the second half when he hurt his already injured left leg and had to be called off by manager

TOP SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LUTON	31	18	8	5	65	34	44
Brad City	33	18	5	10	50	35	41
Barnsley	32	16	9	7	45	34	41
Southend	31	15	10	6	44	35	40
Chesterfield	30	16	7	7	56	30	39
Crewe	30	14	10	6	55	36	38

Allan Brown as he tried to continue after five minutes treatment by the corner flag.

He was substituted by Billy McDerment.

With the crowd wanting more goals, Luton went close on several occasions. But let it be remembered they have scored far and away more goals than any other club in their division, and have not played as many games as most. Surely you can't carp at that!

Just as it was beginning to look all over, John Moore burst in from the left, following good work by Allen, and blasted a left-foot shot past the startled Moor from the narrowest of angles.

Two minutes later Moore's happiness was dampened somewhat when he diverted a hard cross from Kirk past Read for an own goal.

Luton's inside forwards were given plenty of service from stylish wingers Whittaker and French, and half-backs Moore, Branston and Slough were all up to their usual standard.

Jardine hurt

Jardine was having a fine game when he was forced to throw in the towel, and Dougan showed remarkable coolness in many of his clearances.

Darlington goalkeeper Tony Moor surely earned his money, and on top of continued pressure from close quarters, he made one particularly fine

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flying save to a first-half long shot from Slough.

This was another good and timely win for Luton, and a fine going away present for the team, who leave today for a few days beside the seaside at Blackpool in readiness for Saturday's tough fixture at Chesterfield.

The match was a rearranged fixture for the one that was abandoned in October after seven minutes play on a water-logged pitch. Teams:

LUTON: Read; Dougan, Jardine; Slough, Branston, Moore; French, Buxton, Allen, Rioch, Whittaker. Sub: McDerment (for Jardine).

DARLINGTON: Moor; Chapman, Keeble; Davidson, Thompson, Jacques; O'Neil J, O'Neill L, Peverell, Sproates, Kirk. Sub: Kell.

Referee: R. Johnson (Lowestoft)



JOHN MOORE ... two goals in three minutes ... one for each side!