

Town triumph in night of high drama

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, MANSFIELD TOWN 2

68/69

IN a game dramatised by the sending off of Bruce Rioch after only three minutes, and Waller, of Mansfield, in the second half, Luton Town held on to their 100 per cent home record last night. It was a bad-tempered match all through.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Dougan, Jardine; Slough, Branston, Moore; French, Lewis, Sheffield, Rioch, Harrison. Sub: McDerment.

MANSFIELD: Hollins; Roberts, Hopkinson; Quigley, Boam, Waller; Frude, Partridge, Ledger, Goodfellow, Jones. Sub: Keeley.

Referee: M. Sinclair, of Guildford.

Attendance: 19,315.

There was a sensational opening, Rioch being sent off the field in the third minute.

It was impossible to see exactly what happened, because there was a frightful mix-up in front of the Mansfield goal, starting with an effort by Sheffield which hit the post. After that, Rioch had a shot blocked, as did Slough, and there was a pile-up in the goalmouth, in which Hollins was injured.

The referee made as if to take Rioch's name, and then pointed to the dressing room. Pandemonium broke out among the crowd, especially behind the Oak Road end, which the Town were attacking.

There was certainly trouble here, and the crowd was further incensed when in a goalmouth incident Lewis was laid out.

The crowd chanted "Off, off," but the referee decided that the original offence had been committed by Lewis — and there could be little argument about that.

Lewis was brought down just outside the penalty area, and the free kick began a spell of hard pressure by the Town which ended with Hollins clearing a corner from French.

In the 18th minute the Town were awarded a penalty for a foul on Lewis. HARRISON, a penalty expert if ever there was one, made no mis-

take, placing the ball wide of Hollins into the corner of the net.

Read saved the Town with a daring save at Jones's feet when the Town looked in vain for an offside decision.

Read again saved well, this time from Ledger, as Mansfield began to exploit their advantage of having an extra man.

NEARLY A PENALTY

Mansfield's shooting was anything but accurate, which was just as well, because they were looking dangerous on occasions.

The Town were showing plenty of courage, and came close to another penalty award when Boam handled marginally outside the area.

There was still potential menace in the Mansfield raids, and Partridge was not far wide with a shot as Read stood firm footed.

Lewis was injured some few yards outside the penalty area, but the free kick was beaten out.

French made a great effort to increase the Town's lead with a diving header from a centre by Harrison, but Hollins, without knowing much about it, managed to push the ball out.

Half-time:

LUTON TOWN ... 1

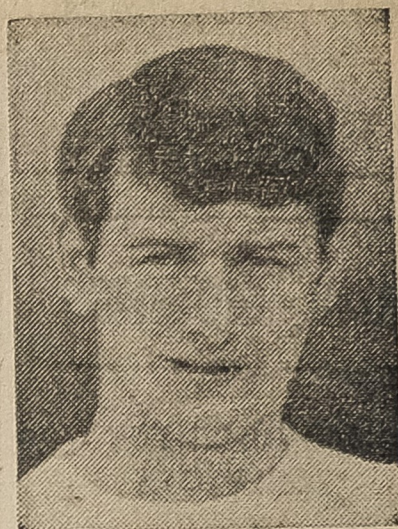
MANSFIELD 0

Trouble hit the Town shortly after the resumption when Mansfield equalised through JONES when the Town's offside trap failed to function.

Then Moore was injured and went off for treatment, and with Branston reduced to almost a hobbling cripple with a knock on the knee, the Town were down to nine men at this stage.

Moore was able to return after a couple of minutes.

Branston came to the touch-



BRUCE RIOCH
Marching orders after three minutes.

line for treatment, and after manager Allan Brown had had a look at the injury, he signalled McDerment to go substitute.

There was half-an-hour left when this happened, and certainly this was a night of misfortune for the Town.

Slough switched to centre-half and McDerment went in at right-half.

With 63 minutes gone, Mansfield's Waller was sent off for a foul on Lewis.

Two minutes later SHEFFIELD headed the Town into the lead again from a centre by Harrison.

The Town increased their lead after 69 minutes with a brilliant goal by LEWIS, again from a pass by Harrison.

BRILLIANT GOAL

FRENCH then scored the sort of goal that hitherto has been the prerogative of Rioch. He ran from deep in his own half, pushing past three defenders before rounding Hollins and planting the ball firmly into the back of the net.

Mansfield came back with a goal by PARTRIDGE after 77 minutes while Harrison was lying injured.