

OH, FOR SOME GOALS!

A TALE OF TOO MANY MISSES . . .

AFTER having 60 per cent of the play and 30 per cent of the luck, Luton Town lost their seventh successive away match when they failed by one goal in a tough encounter at Hartlepool on Saturday.

All they came home with was a collection of bruises, a black eye, a broken tooth, a suspected broken nose and a cut head.

And a bitter feeling of injustice!

For, at the risk of being accused of pandering to a losing team, I have to report that Luton did enough to win. That they came home without at least a point was unbelievable.

They controlled the match for more than half of the time, and created at least as many openings as Hartlepool. It must be said that the Northerners always seemed more likely to score.

Hartlepool's attempts at goals were more clear-cut; no tailor-made. Luton were ragged and unkempt in front of goal.

Rioch missed

Town badly missed the strength, power and skill of Bruce Rioch, who was left at home with a knee injury.

Morris Stevenson, recently signed from Morton, made his first appearance in the Football League. He showed he is very fit, and possesses the willingness to run hard for 90 minutes.

He also displayed skill on the ball, but failed to stamp any real impression on the game.

Sandy Davie, Luton's new goalkeeper, had a red face after the match. It was in the 11th minute that a momentary lapse by him let in Hartlepool.

He tried unsuccessfully to fist away a long free-kick by Tony Bircumshaw, but all he did, in fact, was to jab the ball to the feet of Ron Young. He shot, but this was blocked on the line and rebounded to Peter Blowman who scored easily.

French — again

And that was that. Luton deserved a bonus if only for trying. They were capable of everything but scoring. They could defend smoothly, advance easily, and retain possession for long periods. Both wingers could beat their backs. But they couldn't score.

Best forward was again Graham French who continues his purple patch. He beat full back Alan Goad all afternoon, but his crosses, supplied with equal accuracy with either foot, met with ill-fated, but honest, endeavour in the middle.

**By
Roger Duckworth**

Ian Buxton had another good match, and his exemplary character that makes him one of the game's gentlemen came well to the fore as he took heavy punishment without the slightest glimmer of dissent.

He worked incessantly, especially in the second half, but his many efforts came to naught.

Mike Harrison also did well in approach but was off-mark with his shooting. All he collected for his pains were a black eye and a broken tooth.

Brian Lewis also went close, and had two certain goals stopped by the brilliant Hartlepool goalkeeper George Smith, who seems to save his best displays for Luton.

Smith also denied Terry Branston a goal as Luton barnstormed the home goal in a spectacular finish.

And Stevenson received a gashed head as he fought willingly with his new teammates.

Alan Slough and Keith Allen gave everything they had. Both missed in attempts at goal. Allen made a terrific headed save from Young on the goal-line.

Max Dougan's steady form continued. He was going to have a suspected broken nose seen to yesterday morning. He received a blow in the face in a second-half collision.

Jack Bannister did an adequate job at left-back, as did all the defence. It was that the inside-forwards could not assert authority.

Luton must now accept the fact that they are out of the running for promotion — at least for the moment.

The Christmas fixtures against Plymouth, this week, then Watford and Northampton could settle it one way or another.