

IMPRESSIVE WELCOME FOR STOCK

68/69

LUTON TOWN 2, PLYMOUTH ARGYLE 0

WHILE they can keep on winning their home matches, the Town obviously remain in touch with the promotion issue, and they did just that this afternoon when they were relatively untroubled in maintaining their unbeaten home record.

In fact, Plymouth were lucky to get away so cheaply and did so mainly through the brilliance of their goal-keeper, Dunne. He made a number of great saves, particularly in the first half, as the Town hammered shots at him from all angles and ranges.

In fact this was a refreshingly bright display for the Town following hard on their comparatively poor showing at Hartlepool last Saturday, and served once more to underline heavily the great gap that exists between the quality of their form at home and away.

So confident were they in their attacking football that justice would have been served had they doubled their output of goals.

Interesting innovation — if it can be called that — was that Bruce Rioch was used as a striker, in marked contrast to the midfield link job he has held for most of this season.

In the past he has not been markedly successful when pushed up right in front but he looked the part this afternoon and this was the best I have seen him in this role. Had things run for him in front of goal he could well have had a hat-trick. Plymouth obviously realised his potential danger because he received a buffeting.

Another player who was unlucky not to figure in the scoring list was Mike Harrison, playing against his former colleagues. Time and again he saw terrific drives miss by inches, and he was also the victim of some fine saves by Dunne.

In fact, this pair formed the spearhead of the attack even though the goals came from elsewhere.

One was from Lewis to end a scoring blank, but he found few openings though he used the ball with some accuracy. French was another who kept flashing cleverly into the game.

For Allen it was a return to the midfield where he filled in intelligently and scored a vital goal, so the decision to include him could be said to be justified.

I thought Slough might have been more dominant, now that he was released for a more attacking role, but apart from one period in the second half, when the Town tended to lose control in the middle of the field, the defence was more than adequate, with Branston marshalling it capably.

In fact, the clear-cut openings created by Plymouth were very few and far between, and Davie as I recall it was in real trouble only on a couple of occasions.

So there was a winning and quite impressive welcome for the new manager, Alec Stock, who must have been pleased by the form shown in the first half.

Certainly the game was entertaining enough to satisfy the 10,971 spectators, and there was quite generous applause at the end.