

Harrison injury a blow to Town

By CHILTERN

68/69

THE TOWN'S superior home form was well maintained this afternoon when they set up a commanding two-goal interval lead in their match against Reading at Kenilworth Road.

Slough gave them a great start with a three-minute goal and Lewis scored from the penalty spot just before half-time. But a blow to the Town was the early loss of Harrison with a leg injury.

After Bruce Rioch's cartilage injury, the Town suffered another blow in mid-week when Mike Keen badly damaged an ankle. He may be out for three weeks.

Changes were kept to a minimum, however. Graham French, recovered from his back injury, returned to the right wing, and Brian Lewis, who played there on Wednesday, switched to inside-left. This meant that Keith Allen, one of the strikers in the last two matches, resumed in mid-field.

Five minutes before the start the attendance was below the recent average.

PULLED WIDE

First incident was a strong run by Harris, which took him almost to the edge of the penalty area. But his right-footed shot was pulled wide of the far post.

Fouls on Lewis and Buxton gave the Town free kicks in quick succession. The second led to the Town taking the lead after only three minutes through SLOUGH.

French placed the free kick well, and as the ball dropped Allen was pushed squarely in the back. There was no reaction from the referee and the ball went out to Slough, whose first shot struck a defender. The ball rebounded to him, and this time he made no mistake with a flashing drive that flew wide of the left hand of Brown, who was beaten by the pace of the drive.

Reading hit back, and Slough was in action at the other end, conceding a corner to keep out Denis Allen. This was well placed by the winger, and came close to deceiving Davie, who had to move quickly to push the ball over.

DANGER LOB

There was more trouble for Reading when Slough floated in a dangerous lob which was only partially cleared. Buxton moved smartly and tried to force it home from close range, but Reading were awarded a free-kick for a foul on Brown.

Helped by free kicks for comparatively mild infringements, the Town continued to

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN. — Davie; Dougan, Bannister; Slough, Branston, Moore; French, Buxton, Allen (K), Lewis, Harrison. Substitute: McDerment.

READING — Brown; Bacuzzi, Spiers; Thornhill, Hitchcock, Yard; Allen (D), Collins, Sainty, Silvester, Harris. Substitute: Meldrum.

Referee: Mr. C. Thomas, of Treorchy.

be the more dangerous.

After going into a heavy tackle, Harrison went off to receive attention to his right leg.

While the Town were down to ten men, Silvester was allowed to make a header from what looked like an off-side position, but Davie saved easily enough.

SUBSTITUTE

Harrison, who has had considerable trouble with injuries this season, was obviously not going to return, and after two or three minutes, McDerment came on as substitute. Before he went on he was given instructions by manager Alec Stock.

It became apparent that McDerment was going to take over the midfield role of Allen who was pushed up into the attack.

Buxton took over on the left wing, and Allen went up the middle with Lewis.

The Reading players were switching about all over the place, and their defence was concentrating on coming out quickly to try to catch the Town offside.

A bad mistake by Bacuzzi, who placed the ball straight to Lewis, might have brought a goal to the Town had the Luton forward not been pulled down. It looked a clear case for a penalty, but the Town were out of luck.

Reading kept breaking away, and a dangerous threat to the Town came when Silvester from the right crashed the ball across the face of the goal—too fast for Harris, who was coming in.

A miskick by Moore kept Reading on the attack, and a half-hit shot by Collins bounced tantalisingly the wrong side of the post with Davie scrambling across his goal.

When the Town came back, Lewis, seeking to find a way through, was obstructed inches inside the penalty area. This brought an indirect free-kick, which French pulled back to Lewis, and his low shot threaded its way through a crowd of players and ended just wide.

When Keith Allen's shot was deflected for a corner, it was a signal for a spell of more persistent Town pressure. From another corner Branston, from near the penalty spot, headed wide.

There was a curious incident at the Town end when Davie was obviously fouled and nobody—not even the Reading forwards—took much notice when the ball dropped loose. So it came as a surprise when the referee gave a corner. This brought a rush on the Town goal, and the ball was cleared only with some difficulty.

NEGATIVE

The largely negative tactics of Reading were not helping the entertainment value, and the Town with their reshuffled forward line were now finding difficulty in creating clear-cut openings. Yet they were hav-



Alan Slough gave the Town an early lead following a free-kick.

ing their quota of corners — mostly on the right, where French gained two more.

From the second Brown made a good catch, picking the ball off the head of Branston, who was upfield looking for the half-chance.

A chance for the Town came when Slough sent through Lewis, who did not quite control the ball. Brown came out to dive bravely at his feet and smother the ball at the cost of an injury to himself. Lewis was penalised but the goalkeeper was quickly all right again.

Brown was the busier goalkeeper now. He went up confidently to pick out of the air a centre by Slough. Dougan joined the attack to gain yet another corner and again Brown dealt expertly with French's left-footed inswinger.

PENALTY

Then came a penalty to the Town, and this time it was a crystal clear case when Yard brought down Keith Allen from behind.

With the penalty expert, Harrison, missing, the spot-kick was entrusted to LEWIS, who made no mistake with a rising shot wide of Brown's left hand. This was after 41 minutes.

After this, Reading's defence

BRIAN LEWIS scored the Town's second goal from the penalty spot just before the interval.

was in deep trouble and Brown only just managed to push over a long shot by McDerment.

Evidence of panic showed when Thornhill unnecessarily conceded a corner and from this Keith Allen had a header deflected over.

The Town were completely on top now, and Reading were fortunate when a header by Branston was cleared off the line by Bacuzzi. Half-time:

LUTON TOWN 2
READING 0

In the last five minutes of the first half the Town were completely in command, and with a bit of luck they would have increased their lead.

But Reading began the second half with a show of determination. Sainty dropped the ball on top of the net, then he raced through to flash the ball just the wrong side of the post with Davie full length.

Luton's reply was prompt. A centre by Buxton went across the face of the goal, to be returned by French, and Lewis had a header stopped by Bacuzzi.

ON THE LINE

The corner nearly brought the Town's third goal as Keith Allen, brilliant downward header from French's cross sped goalwards. It looked booked for the back of the net until Spiers got in the way and stopped the ball on the line.

Reading were still in the game, but their finishing was no threat to the Town.

French continued to be the Town's most dangerous raider. An accurately-floated centre by him was finally met by Keith Allen whose first-time shot did not have enough pace to worry Brown.

Buxton came into it with a clever dribble and passed to French. When the ball came over from the right winger Bauzzi headed the ball against the woodwork, and it ended with McDerment missing the far post.

Bannister showed some attacking intent as the Town began to take command again.

Keith Allen, racing through as Reading looked for an off-side decision, took the ball a pace too far and Brown was able to smother it.

Buxton was injured when fouled by Bacuzzi, who had his name taken. There was a hold up while Buxton received attention and eventually he resumed looking a bit the worse for wear.

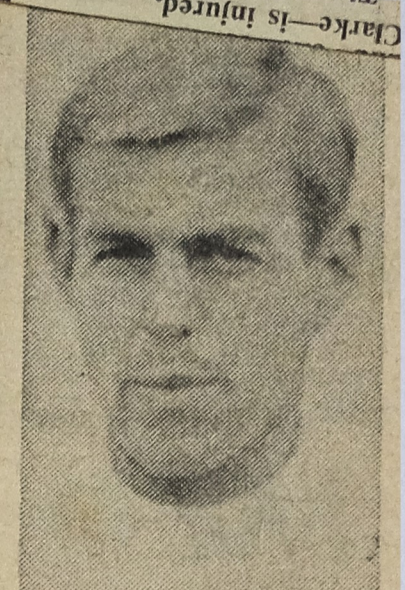
Then came another bad foul, this time by Spiers on Lewis. The referee sent off

How the goals came

SLOUGH for Luton after 3 minutes.
LEWIS (penalty) for Luton after 41 minutes.
YARD for Reading after 76 minutes.

the Reading player, despite the appeals of his colleagues, in the 71st minute.

This was a bit harsh on Spiers, but there had been increasing evidence of roughness in the Reading defence, and he probably paid for this.



Clarke—is injured.

In the 76th minute came a blow to the Town when Reading unexpectedly reduced their arrears through YARD. It followed a free-kick which was headed on by Harris, and Yard on the right of a cluster of players rammed it in between Davie and the near post.

IN TANGLE

Reading's ten men were certainly putting up a fight and getting the Town defence into a tangle. In fact, Luton were in luck when a header by Harris struck Davie on the legs and was hurriedly scrambled to safety.

A remarkable number of chances were going astray—as when French headed on to Lewis, whose shot was scrambled away by Thornhill, and Buxton headed over from the corner.

The Town's lead was looking by no means secure now.

Nearly all the action in the closing minutes was in the Town half of the field until French took a hand again. From a pass by Lewis he banged the ball at goal—and it might well have gone in had it not struck Hitchcock and rebounded inches wide of the post. From the corner Keith Allen headed over.

There was a narrow escape for the Town when a shot by Collins going straight for the corner of the net struck Moore, who was running across. That fact probably saved a certain equaliser.

Result:

LUTON TOWN 2
READING 1