

DREAM START BUT...

LUTON TOWN 2, READING 1

FOR the second consecutive match, the Town had a dream start with a quick goal, and then failed to make the most of it.

In the end, they had to struggle to register their twelfth home victory of the season.

It was brought about by a combination of bad luck, some last ditch clearances by the Reading defence, and a lack of decision in front of goal.

On the other hand, it was difficult to assess just how much the Town's goal potential was affected by Harrison having to limp out of the match in the 10th minute with a pulled muscle in his right thigh.

UNBALANCED

This rather unbalanced the front line, and gave us no extended view of Buxton's ability as a striker, which was a pity in view

of the absence of Rioch for the next few weeks.

Buxton was switched to outside-left. He held the ball intelligently, but, of course, he could not be expected to perform as an orthodox left-winger.

In consequence, French was kept well supplied, and he responded to give his most sparkling display for a long time. A stream of centres came from him, and better use should have been made of them.

OFFSIDE TACTICS

Reading pinned their faith a good deal on offside tactics as their defensive plan, and managed to be dangerous in breakaway. Like the Town, however, they

were not impressive in front of goal, so that the match turned out to be one of missed opportunities.

That early goal came after three minutes through SLOUGH who, after his first shot had been beaten down, made no mistake with a sizzling drive from the rebound.

There could have been a penalty award before this, Keith Allen was pushed in the back, and when Lewis was pulled down.

The referee could hardly fail to react, however, four minutes from the interval when Allen was tripped from behind as he was ploughing towards the goal.

LEWIS made no mistake from the spot.

Hard though they tried, the Town could not increase their lead after half-time, and Reading did not really become a dangerous force until they had been reduced to 10 men by Spiers receiving marching orders for a foul on Lewis.

Strangely, it seemed to act as a spur to them, for they played their best football of the match, and there was a scare for the Town when a goal by YARD 16 minutes from the end was followed by a couple of narrow escapes.

So, on the whole, it was a patchy performance by

the Town, though manager Alec Stock felt that more openings were created and that the midfield build-up was better.

French was the best forward, and when Reading were fighting desperately to save a point, Dougan, Branston and Bannister stood firm under pressure, especially as there were a couple of occasions when Davie failed to leave his line to cut out dangerous crosses.

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

READING: Brown; Bacuzzi, Spiers; Thornhill, Hitchcock, Yard; Allen (D.), Collins, Sainty, Silvester, Harris, Substitute: Meldrum. Referee: C. Thomas, Treorchy. Attendance: 11,871.



Brian Lewis scores from the penalty spot in Town's 2-1 victory over Reading.—DS8540M.