

LUTON KEEP IN PROMOTION STAKES

68/69

LUTON TOWN 3, BRIGHTON 0

THIS WAS a game the Town simply had to win in order to stay in the promotion hunt with any sort of chance—and they made no mistake about it.

Possibly, in view of Brighton's recent record, which is a vast improvement on their early season form, the two points came rather more easily than had been anticipated. At no time was the Town's impressive home record, which now extends to 22 home games without defeat, in the slightest danger.

That the victory was earned without the services of such stalwarts as Davie, Allen, Harrison, Sheffield and Jardine give a clear indication that the Town have strength in reserve and they could well need all their resources for the tough away games that face them next week.

This was rather emphasised by the fact that two minutes from the end Branston limped off with an ankle injury and with the next game looming up at Southport as quickly as Monday that could be a serious matter.

This was no thriller. That could not be expected in view of the prevailing conditions. A blustery wind made accuracy extremely difficult and the hard, dusty conditions were most unhelpful.

However, of the two teams the Town seemed less handicapped and throughout they had much more of the play, a fact that probably stemmed from them establishing an ascendancy in midfield.

For all the difficulties this was a more entertaining game than the one against Southport on Tuesday because Brighton were not preoccupied with deep defensive tactics and showed a greater liking for attack.

Not that this amounted to a great deal because there the Town defence was so sound that Read, having his first outing since the first Saturday in October, was not seriously troubled except on a couple of occasions.

In fact the Town's defence has an impressive record, having yielded only five goals in the last nine matches.

At the same time there has been a shortage of goals from the forwards which was remedied to a certain extent this afternoon when French and Lewis obtained the goals that enabled the Town more or less to coast home.

Slough again was prominent for his driving force in midfield and it will perhaps be a pity if he has to revert to centre-half should the fears about Branston be realised.

Branston was very sound in the middle but I thought that Bannister was the outstanding defender.

French took the eye in attack, as a skilful player like him is liable to do in conditions like these.

There was continuous probing by Lewis, aided by Buxton, who showed clever footwork to suggest that he might well have been used more by the Town this season.

Rioch is still struggling to find his best form and is not yet the dangerous raider he was before his injury.

This was an efficient, workmanlike performance by the Town and with a partial slip by Swindon today their hopes are still fluttering at least.

Attendance: 11,965.