

LUTON CAN LOOK FORWARD TO REPLAY

A THIRD DIVISION side whose system did not quite click could not beat a Fourth Division side who started brightly, and then resorted to the 'big-boot' tactics usually credited to their level of soccer. That is the story of the match at Peterborough last night.

Luton played with three attackers for most of the time, and personally I would have liked to have seen two orthodox wingers operating. Afterwards coach Jimmy Andrews explained: "Played right, this system can be most effective. The trouble is, not everyone did what he was asked to do."

As it was, Sheffield and MacDonald, both willing workers, were left to batter away at a packed, uncompromising defence.

Luton occasionally produced the goods, and at times they played some of their smoothest football across the middle of the park. This was good to watch, but unfortunately there was not enough of it. And what there was was usually ruined by either a bad final pass or a fly-kicked clearance that put the game back to square one.

Most of what was good came from the brain of Mike Keen. He was Luton's outstanding player, controlling the middle of the field by picking up just about every clearance and loose ball.

Lacked support

But one man cannot control a match, and all too often Keen lacked support as he probed away at the ranks of the Posh defence.

Still, as Alec Stock said after the match: "It's important that you don't lose these matches. We didn't lose. Once you start losing there's no hope for you."

I'll stick my neck out, and say that Luton will murder this Peterborough side in the replay. Luton will play 4-2-4 at home and that will make all the difference.

The Town have a real find in Malcolm MacDonald. Last night he moved from the left wing to take Brian Lewis' place at inside right. And he was Luton's most dangerous forward. He goes in hard for the loose ball, shows startling ability in the air — for a converted full-back — and is the owner of a tremendous shot with either foot.

He received a kick last night, and I hope for Luton's sake that he is fit for the tough away match at Bournemouth on

tight corner, and the sea-siders are reputed to be a hard side this season.

French, too, had a good night, prompting from the left. But I reckon he is more effective on the right flank, and he proved this last night when he wandered across a couple of times and laid on scoring chances that were squandered.

Almost . . .

Luton, in fact, almost went ahead in the first 20 seconds, without Peterborough touching the ball. Keen and Sheffield worked through the middle from the kick-off, and the ball was put out to Ryan who put across a fine centre which the lively MacDonald headed against a post.

Immediately Posh hit back and winger Tommy Robson missed the easiest of chances after being set up by Hampton.

The Luton defence was apt to be caught square, and in the 11th minute it erred badly when the home side took the lead. Nippy winger Bobby Moss sped past Bannister, caught Moore out of position and squared the ball back across the face of the goal for Peter Price to head a neat goal past Tony Read.

The Luton goalkeeper had no chance, but he was not too pleased to concede a goal on his first visit to London Road since he spent eight months there as a player before moving to Luton.

PETERBOROUGH UTD 1 LUTON TOWN 1 By ROGER DUCKWORTH

For a short spell the passing of Keen and French left a bit to be desired, but they both soon regained their grip, and Luton equalised in the 22nd minute.

French made the goal — through sheer persistence. He beat two men and crossed. The ball rebounded to him, and after shaping to send across another centre, he pushed the ball to the well-placed Allen who thumped across a splendid cross.

MacDonald hurled himself forward, missed, and Sheffield, half unsighted, collected a grand goal by diving forward to head the ball down past Drewery.

Bad passing

Apart from some good tries by MacDonald, Luton had little to offer for the remainder of the first half. Their more ambitious ideas were going wrong because of bad passing, and quick tackling by Peterborough.

At the same time the Posh were showing that the old fashioned run by the winger to the by-line and a squared centre was most effective.

From one of these, the Luton defence was again caught in two minds but Hall missed an easy chance. Then Read did well to turn round a Price header from a Hall centre.

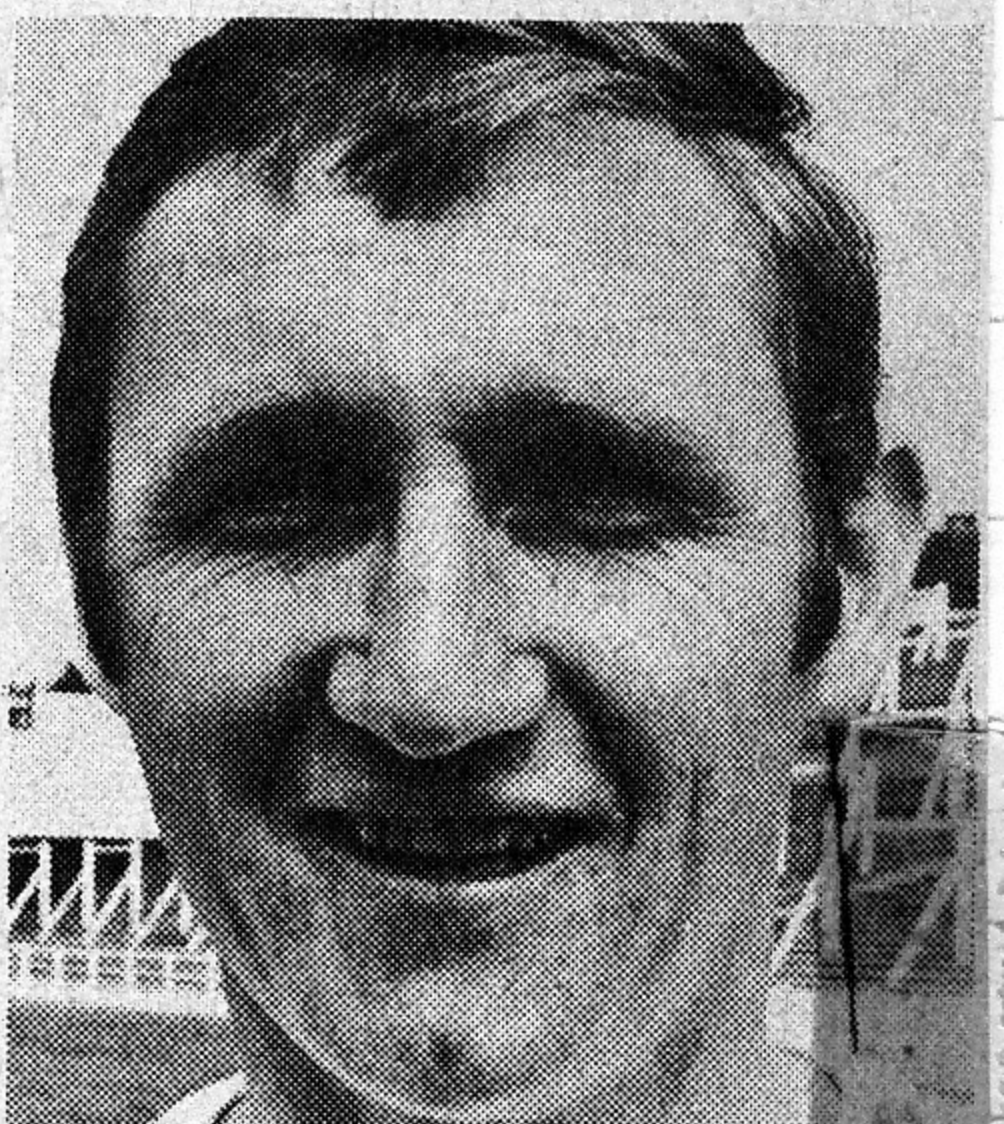
Town full backs Ryan and Bannister both covered and tackled well but their dis-

PETERBOROUGH UNITED: Drewery; Potts, Noble; Hampton, Wile, Wright; Moss, Price, Hall, Iley, Robson. Sub — Holliday.

LUTON: Read; Ryan, Bannister; Keen, Branston, Moore, Slough, MacDonald, Sheffield, Allen, French. Sub — Phillips.

REFEREE — H. W. Ellis (Goole).

ATTENDANCE — 10,249.



MIKE KEEN

tribution could have been better.

Former First Division player Jim Iley, player-manager of Peterborough, showed a lot of his old know-how, and worked well in spite of the close attention of Alan Slough, who did a fair job in tailing him all night. This, of course, meant that the Town had to forego the drive of Slough as an attacking wing half.

Luton moved better in the second half, with MacDonald again looking the most aggressive. Sheffield was toiling away, but not really getting the balls he wanted from the touchlines.

For some reason Keith Allen was not as evident as he usually is, and Branston and Moore still have one or two problems to work out between themselves, although both made some timely stops.

Read again did well in goal, and on this showing, I can't see him forfeiting his place to Sandy Davie.