

ALEC
STOCK
TALKS
OF THE
'TERRIFIC
TENSION
AT THE
TOP'

Nothing relaxing about this Bournemouth!

2913

7-10-69

'Cox plan' subdues the Town

AFTER LUTON TOWN had failed to score in a League match for the first time this season last night, in front of the biggest crowd of the season at Kenilworth Road, manager Alec Stock blamed tension for his side's poor display. And then he asked for more support from the Luton fans.

"With all this talk about unbeaten records and the rest of it, I have a lot of desperate players at the moment. The tension is terrific, and everyone is frightened to death of losing. Managers are supposed to manage, directors direct, players play and supporters support. This is when we need the support — when we are struggling.

"The crowd were getting at us a bit tonight. Once upon a time they would have been darned pleased to take a point from that one. I hate to think what's going to happen when we lose!

"We all know our shortcomings, but I have a delightful crowd of blokes who try very hard for Luton Town. But at the moment they are too record conscious. Stan Cullis told me that the best thing would be for us to get a damn good hiding. I don't go along with that, but it's our fans' job to give us the support we need.

"Although we didn't succeed, there was more sweat in that game tonight than in any other game this season."

I know what Mr Stock means. The 18,000 Luton crowd was too quick to criticise. All they seemed to want was kick and rush. When any Luton player tried to put his foot on the ball and slow things down, he received howls of anger.

Keen was the first to suffer for this, and as a result he was hurried into having a poor game. So was Collins.

Satisfied

Despite the fact that there were no goals, it wasn't an unentertaining match. I suppose it depends what you want to see. For the die-hard Luton fan who can see only white, it was frustrating, even annoying, to see chances going to waste and players performing badly.

But for those who went along purely to see a good game of football, they must have gone home fairly satisfied. Bournemouth played in a manner that belied their poor niche in the Third Division. No one can accuse them of negative tactics. They were always quick to break, and in the second half won five corners to Luton's one.

They played, in fact, the Cox plan. Their manager, Freddie Cox, told me afterwards: "We had a little plan tonight, and it worked. I don't want to explain it, or everyone will understand it. But things were getting bad for us. We have been playing well without things going right.

"We played to shut out

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

LUTON TOWN	0
BOURNEMOUTH	0

French and win things in the air. It was a plan to counter Luton's 4-2-4 system, and we did it right. I think we entertained the crowd. There were plenty of 'oohs' and 'aahs' anyway."

There were some boos at the end, too, aimed at the Luton players by their disgruntled clients. That's the trouble with always winning — it's hard to take when you don't.

Costly

It was a costly night for Luton. It cost Fred Jardine a couple of broken teeth, Sandy

midfield passing was bad too. Luton's passing never matched that of MacDougall, Stocks and Hold.

Goalkeeper Sandy Davie was Luton's best player. Last night he dropped his habit of punching when he should be catching, and he looked a different man.

Backs Jardine and Bannister did well, too. It was the half-backs who had the most uncomfortable night. Nicholl was not at his sharpest, and Slough, before he limped off at half-time, had been working

TOP NINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LUTON TOWN	13	9	4	0	28	8	22
Barnsley	13	9	2	2	22	12	20
Doncaster Rovers	13	7	4	2	15	8	18
Orient	13	6	6	1	19	11	18
Bradford City	12	7	3	2	19	9	17
Torquay United	13	7	3	3	23	12	17
Rochdale	13	7	3	3	27	18	17
Bristol Rovers	13	6	4	3	26	18	16
Brighton	13	6	3	4	15	12	15

Davie a black eye and bruised ribs, and Alan Slough a nasty knock on the fibrous tissues of an ankle, which makes him doubtful for Saturday's match at Doncaster.

This is certainly no comfort for the Town. Barnsley crept within two points of their pinnacle with a good win over Bristol Rovers last night, and Luton are still without Max Dougan, on whom a decision has still to be made regarding the seriousness of his knee injury.

There's no doubt that Luton were off form, and I think they were a bit lucky to come through without losing in the end. Bournemouth staged a magnificent late rally which brought them three chances. One of them, from MacDougall, was headed onto a post two minutes from the end by the brave Jardine.

Little finesse

The last 12 minutes of the match belonged to the seashiders, who mounted five dangerous raids as they got a late second wind. Luton had had more chances than this previously, but they had squandered them. They were lucky to survive when Bournemouth had their go.

Luton seemed particularly adept at missing goals. There were high-speed thrills and spills, but little championship finesse. Luton were checked by the fast-tackling, aggressive Bournemouth who, on this showing, will end the season well-placed.

Long balls into the middle, by air, were a waste of time against Bournemouth, but Luton, Keen in particular, persisted in using them. Their

hard without a great deal of success.

Allen tried all he knew to get things working smoothly again, but the task was too much for him. French and Tees were the best of the forwards, with Collins and Macdonald missing chances galore.

But today Mr Stock emphasised: "If they are all fit, they will all play on Saturday. There will be no changes in my side after a game like that."

Endeavour

Laurie Sheffield played in the second half, for Slough, and gave a warm display of honest endeavour. He went as close as anyone to scoring.

Last night Luton were methodists — not the religious sort — with their best chances coming from deadball moves, especially corners. But when they were moving, there was not enough intelligent use of the wings — just long clearances down the middle, where poor Tees and Macdonald were expected to graft alone — and with the help of Sheffield in the second half.

There is going to have to be some rethinking before Saturday. This sort of ploy will be of little use on the wide open spaces of Doncaster.

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Jardine, Bannister; Keen, Nicholl, Slough (Sheffield); Collins, Macdonald, Fees, Allen, French.

BOURNEMOUTH: Jones; White, Miller; Naylor, Stocks, Foote; Hartley, Rowles, MacDougall, Hold, Meredith. Sub: Simmons.

Referee: J. Hunting (Leicester).

Attendance: 18,065.



Plenty of near things at Kenilworth Road last night — and this was one of them. An effort by John Collins sends the ball just wide of a post.