

STOCK SCRAPS

TRANSFER LIST

69/70

AFTER ANOTHER disappointing home result on Saturday, Town manager Alec Stock tore up his transfer list. "All of a sudden we can't afford to let anyone go," he said. "With one or two out of form and an injury here and there, you suddenly find you need everyone you've got."

By **ROGER DUCKWORTH**

Luton Town 1,

Torquay Utd 1

That means that, for the time being at least, Brian Lewis, Mike Harrison, Morris Stevenson and Laurie Sheffield stay at Kenilworth Road.

Not that they would all have been allowed to go anyway, but offers for their services would have been listened to.

"We are at the crossroads," Mr Stock told me after the match. "From now on I am going to scrap 4-3-3 at home, and re-introduce two wingers."

"We need a bit more pace and craft, but you can't kick spirit in the teeth. This would be criminal. But we can't seem to play as well at home as we do away. My players are the most disappointed blokes in the camp about this. "Why can't we win at home?" they are saying.

"We have other blokes we can bring into the team. We have Harrison and Lewis and Sheffield, and we have to consider these things. But I shall not bother too much about away matches. The stuff we are playing away is about right."

More difficult

Mr Stock was disappointed at not beating Torquay. So was the biggest Saturday crowd of the season at Luton. Allan Brown's side put up a real fight, and Luton found it more than usually difficult to crack the massed defence.

But that's not the only problem to be sorted out. There was a deal of indecision in midfield by the Town, and some performances that were distinctly below their best by the players responsible.

Left back Jack Bannister did not carry his usual conviction, John Ryan, coming in for the injured Jardine, gave the nippy Scott too much scope — and headed in an own goal — and John Collins, who left early in the second half to have five stitches in a cut forehead, looked a bit out of touch.

Malcolm Macdonald has lost his scoring flair, and apart from a couple of chances in the first half, faded in the second half when he switched positions with man-of-the-match Keith Allen. Add to that the fact that Mr Brown had set three men to keep an eye on the guiles of Graham French, and you have a side operating at about two thirds effectiveness.

Brown delighted

Torquay certainly looked as good as any side I have seen in the Third Division this season. And Allan Brown was delighted with their showing: "We did everything right and well deserved the point," he said. "We played well."

On Luton's credit side goalkeeper Davie looked as safe as houses, Mike Keen, directed operations with vigour, and impressed with distribution, and Alan Slough and Chris Nicholl looked sound in the middle of the back four.

Then there was the bravery of Matt Tees. Once again he took his weekly battering with pluck and a wry grin. And he scored Luton's face-saving equaliser with a courageous header after Allen headed a Keen free kick across the face of the goal.

Luton's fans had a second

chance to see the match yesterday afternoon when it was televised by London Weekend. And in an interview with Jimmy Hill, Mr Stock said he had never come across a player who took as much punishment as Matt. He called him "gutsy". He's just about right.

During the interview Mr Stock described Luton's goal as "our only professional move of the day." He was about right there too.

And when asked by Hill how Luton had won all their points Mr Stock replied: "I wouldn't shoot at you for saying that after yesterday."

Unfortunate Ryan

Torquay collected their half-time lead in the 20th minute. Scott slipped a short ball from the left touch-line to Mitchinson who propelled it towards goal from a good 30 yards. Davie would have been able to catch it one-handed, but it struck the head of the unfortunate Ryan and was deflected past the Luton goalkeeper.

Collins was replaced by Brian Lewis, who got a great big welcome back to the side. He was playing in the first team for the first time since

the early matches of the season. It was he who was awarded the foul against Young from which Luton's goal came.

Lewis looked impressive. It obviously takes a little time to readjust your game to Third division standards. But he looked sharp and aggressive.

For Torquay, Donnelly was sound in goal, Young and Kitchener gave dour displays at the back, and Cave, Mitchinson and Scott stood out in attack.

But there are other good

sides around too and Luton will have to learn how to dent these packed defences. To me it seems the only way is constant pressure and the snapping up of half chances. Hard work is the only answer.

The visitors lost centre forward and leading scorer John Rudge in the first half, and he was replaced by Welsh.

I was not over-impressed with the refereeing of Mr Graham, who tended to let too much go. You can stamp out the kicking and shirt-pulling without being pedantic.

MATCH DETAILS

Luton Town: Davie; Ryan, Bannister, Keen, Nicholl, Slough, Collins (Lewis), Macdonald, Tees, Allen, French.

Torquay: Donnelly; Sander-son, Glozier, Dunne, Young, Kitchener, Benson, Cave, Rudge (Welsh), Mitchinson, Scott.

Goals: Ryan (og 20 mins), Tees (57 mins).

Attendance: 16,087.

Referee: Mr N. Graham (Newbiggin).