

Thanks Luton, that's what we needed



Luton have a young mascot at their home matches. On Saturday it was the turn of Trevor Coote. Trevor, above, can really claim to have brought the side good luck!

"ALL THEY want at our house for Christmas is points," said Town manager Alec Stock after his side's 5-0 thrashing of Bradford City on Saturday. "My wife and daughters say they don't want anything else. I suppose they reckon that if Luton get the points, dad will be happy and they'll have a good time anyway."

Well, everyone concerned should be happy now. Seldom have Luton played so well — it was a well-timed performance designed to shake off the stigma of the Hillingdon Cup defeat. And Mr Stock added: "We needed that. Last week I didn't buy a single newspaper. Tomorrow I'll get the lot!"

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Luton gave a delightful performance of push-and-run football that underlined their Third Division authority. It's a pity that not more people turned up to see it.

After the match three-goal hero Malcolm Macdonald burst into the referee's room and swiped the ball, which his colleagues autographed for him. Said Mr Stock: "We let Malcolm have it. It's a sort of tradition when you get three."

This big win couldn't have come at a better time for Luton. Now they are one match from Christmas with a three-point lead at the top. That's a bigger lead than any of the other division leaders have.

A Bradford City director told me afterwards: "I always reckon we get one thumping a season. Now I'm glad it's over. It couldn't have come from a better side. I never mind losing to a team that play as well as Luton did today. They would have beaten anyone."

Sensational

The most pleasing thing about Luton's nap hand was that all their players found top form at the same time. I have never seen them working so hard for each other.

Now let's forget Hillingdon and concentrate on keeping it up at Bristol Rovers next Saturday.

Luton looked lively from the start. In the first five minutes they had as many shots blocked. And Matt Tees, who ended the match in the dressing room "resting" an aggravated leg injury, set the ball rolling in sensational manner.

After ten minutes of sparkling football, in which Bradford took no mean part, Luton won another corner. French swung it over from the left flag and Tees soared into the air from the six-yard line to scream a header past Liney.

Four minutes later Mac, who really found things running for him for once, smashed home the second from a narrow angle after anticipating a rather foolish back pass from full-back Atkins.

French had started the trouble, and it was he who laid on the third for John Collins a minute before the interval.

Collins took the low cross well and thumped it past Liney first time.

Most of the Town's second-half efforts were frustrated, but they never stopped entertaining. Their computerised thinking and navigated running kept the smallest crowd of the season roaring. You never know, perhaps it was the moaners of recent weeks who stayed away.

Reward

After countless close calls, Macdonald reaped his reward in the 84th minute. He slipped past McConnell on the touch-line and headed straight for goal. It was about the fourth time he had found himself in a similar situation, and one felt for him. But we needn't have bothered, for the Luton forward blasted in a grand shot that beat Liney all ends up.

And a couple of minutes from the scheduled end he was heading for goal again, all

alone, when he was hacked down from behind, and scored from the resultant penalty.

Liney, though, almost stopped it. In fact the City goalkeeper has stopped seven of his last nine penalties.

The Luton defence had an outstanding afternoon, with my honours going to John Ryan and Chris Nicholl. Ryan, like Bannister, showed a penchant for bursting forward and having a go. Bannister, in fact, brought the save of the afternoon out of Liney with a first-timer in the first half.

Little clue

Alan Slough was always cool and hard-working, showing a good understanding with his colleagues.

John Collins and Keith Allen worked well together in the middle, and both enjoyed helping the attack. Mike Keen showed an improvement of form, especially when moving forward.

Bradford had little clue about what to do with the wiles of French, who played the part of two wingers, working alternately on either flank. He laid on the second and third goals.

Tees showed more fire than in recent weeks, and covered a lot of ground. When he limped off, Peter Phillips inherited some energetic chasing, showing a real turn of speed, and was unlucky not to net his first League goal.

In goal Sandy Davie had a few anxious moments, especially early on when he looked unsure with his fisting.

If one fault can be found for

Macdonald it was that he tried shots too often from too far out when he might have done better to find a colleague.

But Bradford, who were promoted at the end of last season, cannot really be blamed for capitulating. They often looked dangerous, and Ham had hard luck when he hit a post. It is interesting to note that the whole City outfit cost only £9,500.

MATCH DETAILS

Luton Town: Davie; Ryan, Bannister; Keen, Nicholl, Slough; Macdonald, Collins, Tees, Allen, French. Sub: Phillips (for Tees, 67 mins).

Bradford City: Liney; Atkins, Cooper; Stowell, Hallett, Leighton; Hall, Ham, Corner, Bannister, Middleton. Sub: McConnell (for Middleton, 67 mins).

Goals: Tees (Luton 10 min. Macdonald (Luton) 14 min. Collins (Luton) 44 min. Macdonald (Luton) 84 min. Macdonald (Pen, Luton) 89 min.

Attendance: 11,857.

Referee: Mr D. J. Lyden (Birmingham).