



● Luton's first... striker Malcolm Macdonald evades a tackle by Reading full-back Dennis Butler to ram the ball past diving 'keeper Steve Death

Five-goal Luton boost average

Luton 5 Reading 0: by DAVID HANINGTON

A HAT-TRICK by Malcolm Macdonald took Luton to a runaway win. And just as important, Alec Stock's set of flying triers gave their morale as big a boost as their goal average, at a really crucial point of the season. Reading must rue the way Luton select them as special victims.

It was Luton who ended their promising unbeaten run earlier in the month, when Reading looked set fair for promotion. This shattering defeat, coupled with one at Brighton the previous day, means that Jack Mansell will have to kiss goodbye to his hopes. And Luton? With Macdonald showing such devastating finishing power, and the two new boys, goalkeeper Alan Starling and Viv Busby, adding star talent, there's a

heap of happy Hatters at K...
Yet until the four-goal blitz in the second half, it was anybody's result. Luton held a slender interval lead—but that was only because their novice 'keeper Starling played as if he had not been told that the World Cup party was already picked!

Starling was superb. To say the boy was "on song" may be corny, but correct. I have in mind a brave reflex save after 12 minutes to beat away John Harley's shot, hit with full force at only eight yards' range.

Then there was that 16-minute flick-on from Tony Wagstaff, which Terry Bell hammered and Starling touched effortlessly away.

Last—and best of all—a thrilling double-play two minutes before half-time. First Starling soared to tip away Terry Bell's attempted header. Then he made an unbelievable headline dive along the deck to punch clear from Bobby Williams's toe-cap.

A BONUS

So much for the saves. The goals almost came as a bonus. Macdonald, looking as classy as they come, had edged Luton into the lead with a crisp 11th minute effort after Viv Busby drew Stuart Morgan and gave him the chance.

But this still gave no notice of the impending Reading rout.

Thirty seconds after the interval Macdonald dashed down the right wing, kept control and lost Morgan with the aid of beautiful balance and acceleration.

Calmly he drew Steve Death and just as coolly deluded him and slipped the ball into the net. A goal to remember!

And which we instantly forgot, amid the exhilaration of Macdonald's hat-trick—a mere five minutes later.

John Collins's corner kick ran across the goalmouth and Macdonald banged it in.

Busby got his reward for artistry and effort after 57 minutes when Macdonald touched on a Mike Keen free kick and the lad rapped in his first League goal.

With Reading's coffin already nailed shut, Mike Harrison hammered in the fifth goal five minutes before the end, and Reading's humiliation was complete.