

TENSION ROBS TOWN OF MORE GOALS

LUTON TOWN 1,
SOUTHPORT 0

NOT for the first time, Southport gave the Town trouble at Kenilworth Road when, on Tuesday night, in search of a desperately-needed point to help stave off the relegation bogy, they threw a deep, defensive curtain over their penalty area. It took the Town a long time to find a way through, writes **ERIC PUGH**.

When the goal did come three minutes after half-time, it was well worth waiting for. In fact, coach Jimmy Andrews described it as the best the Town have scored this season — a viewpoint with which I will not quarrel.

Certainly, there has not been a more valuable success, because it had the effect of bringing the Town within touching distance of promotion, and led to hundreds of the Oak Road contingent of fans remaining behind for a long time after play ended, chanting, "We are the champions."

Quick thinking

Scorer was **BUSBY**, who plays with surprising maturity in view of the fact that he has only three months' professional experience behind him, and this was only his seventh game in the League side.

As an example of quick thinking and ball control, it was a gem, because he fastened on to a long clearance by Read, brushed aside the dual challenge of Dunleavy and Peat, both of whom were fractionally late in realising the danger.

Then, with the gallant Wraith coming out to try to save the situation, the inside-right lifted the ball over his head, and it was bound for a spot just under the bar as soon as it left his foot.

Unrelenting

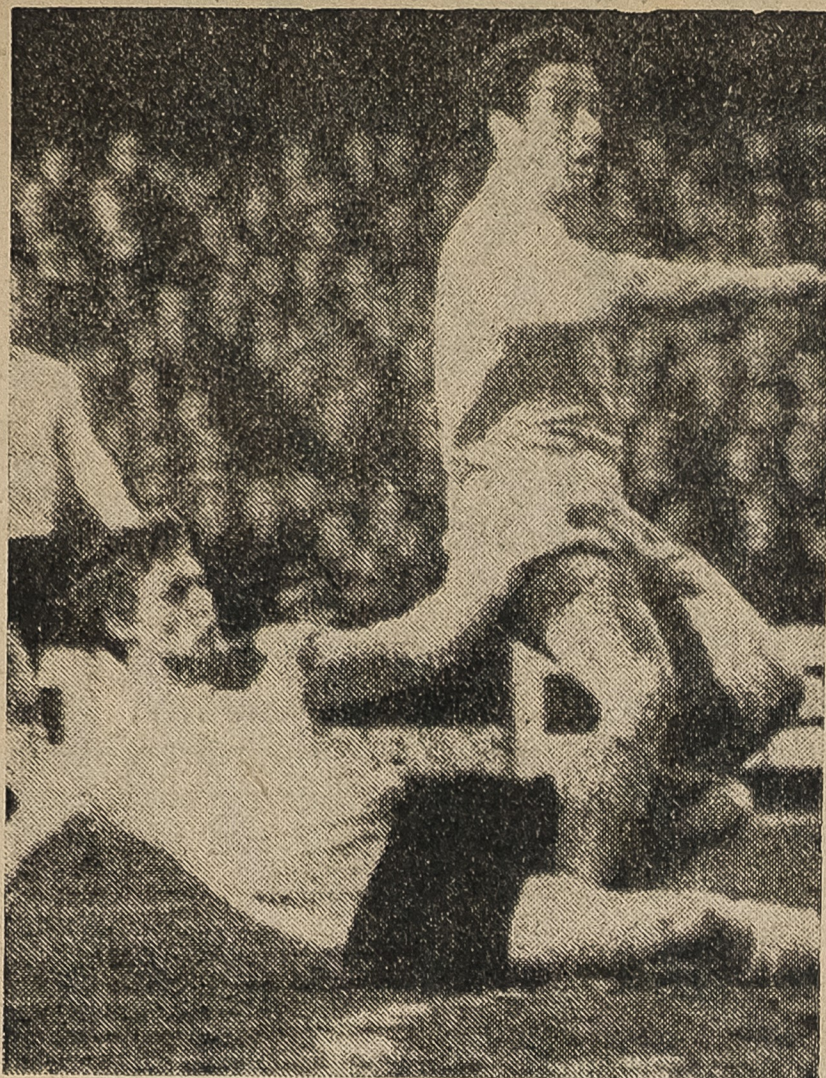
The first half had been a hard, unrelenting battle with the Town doing nearly all the attacking, but unable to pierce the visitors' defence, which sometimes mustered as many as nine inside the penalty area.

Making matters worse, was the fact that although Collins was used mostly as a striker, he was usually to be found in the inside-left spot, with the result that the Town's right wing was almost non-existent.

With French below his best, the Town had not the power on the flanks to turn the grim Southport rear-guard, and there had to be concentration down the middle, where progress was difficult to achieve.

Over-anxiety

To add to it all, there was a certain amount of tension and over-anxiety about the



Viv Busby falls to a tackle which came too late to prevent his scoring the Town's vital goal against Southport.—AW1795T. 69/70

Town's play, as indicated by two wild shots by Moore, and one from Collins, who blazed over from no more than 10 yards.

Ironically, the best chance fell to Southport in one of their isolated raids shortly before half-time. Cheetham, who had been working the ball effectively, suddenly set things up for Russell (M) as he came past him on the left.

With only Read to beat, Russell looked certain to give the visitors a shock

shot brilliantly saved by Wraith and, four minutes from the end, hit the under-part of the bar

Miss of the second half was made by Ryan, who rocketed the ball much too high from no more than five yards following a corner

Few openings came the way of MacDonald who, however, was always probing. The middle of the field was again adequately looked after by Slough and Keen, with the latter maintaining his recent vastly improved form.

In keeping their fourth blank sheet in a row, the defence was again in great form, with the experienced Branston dominating, and Dougan making a welcome and effective re-appearance after a long absence through injury.

Earned his bonus

Doubts about the wisdom of bringing in Read, in view of the scarcity of match experience he has obtained recently, were removed and, although he did not have much to do, that one save from Russell earned him his bonus and his handling was clean and competent.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Dougan, Ryan; Slough, Branston; Moore; Collins, Busby, MacDonald, Keen, French. Substitute: Allen.

SOUTHPORT: Wraith; Pearson, Alty; Peat, Dunleavy, Russell (M); Russell (A). Aindow, Redrobe, Cheetham, Pring. Substitute: Clarke.

Referee: P. R. Walters, Bridgwater. **Attendance** 16,756.



TONY READ made a vital goalkeeping save.

lead, but the goalkeeper just got enough of a touch to the ball to deflect it wide

Then came Busby's goal to relieve much of the tension, and he might well have gone on to complete a hat-trick, because he had a