

STOCK QUIET ON LUTON DEFEAT

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

BOLTON 4 LUTON TOWN 2

THE usually vociferous Luton manager, Alec Stock, was stuck for words after the Town's initial defeat at Bolton on Saturday. All I could get out of him after the match was: "I don't feel very good about that one." And he didn't look it either.

But coach Jimmy Andrews was more biting: "The goals we gave away were scandalous," he said outside the Luton dressing room. "You can't give those away like that and expect to win."

As well as conceding two penalties, Luton let in two softish-looking efforts — one in each half.

Mr Andrews said it was too early to envisage any changes in the side. "When you have changes like we had today you can expect it to take a little time to settle down," he told me.

Wrong foot

But he admitted he was glad that Luton were playing at Gillingham in the League Cup on Wednesday. "It's just the sort of match we need to sort ourselves out," he said.

Luton got off on the wrong foot in the 18th minute when a hard cross from Taylor hit Alan Slough's hand at short range. He had no chance to get out of its way and he did not control the ball in any way but Mr Yates pointed to the spot from which Terry Wharton opened his hat-trick start to the season.

Afterwards I did not hear one voice agree that it should have been a penalty. But perhaps I should have gone into the Bolton dressing room.

Mr Andrews said: "We were unlucky with the first penalty."

And the Luton skipper, Mike Keen, who was the Town's outstanding player, said: "I am most disappointed, it was a stupid penalty."

Late dive

Mike himself evened the score eight minutes later with a cool-headed long shot, but the Town turned round trailing after a long-range effort from Greaves beat Starling who, perhaps unsighted, dived late.

But it was from the first half that Luton can salvage the hope of better things to come. They played some delightful

football for 20 minutes or so and even when they were 2-1 down they looked good for at least a point.

New men Givens and Hoy impressed with their strength and mobility, and Jimmy Ryan joined in patches of exciting attacking football. With Macdonald showing strength of purpose in the middle things looked bright for a time.

Unfortunately it did not last and the attack faded in the second half when it was really needed.

Busby has still to find his form and with the Bolton defence turning ruthless Luton began to show less and less.

Wingers

One basic difference between the two sides was that Bolton used two effective wingers. Luton didn't.

It was Wharton and Taylor who tore Luton apart. They were helped by the fact that it took backs Slough and Ryan some time to acclimatise themselves to their new positions. It must be pointed out that they fared a lot better in the second half.

Byrom and Greaves were dangerous in the middle, though Branston did a good job on Roger Hunt. Moore tackled well and often showed a cool head in trouble.

But all in all this is a team that needs attention. They are fit enough but obviously not yet mentally attuned to their new circumstances.

In goal, Starling gets full marks for handling and courage but he can take some blame for at least one of the other goals.

Tempers became a trifle warm in the second half and at

MATCH DETAILS

ATTENDANCE: 11,350.

GOALS: Wharton, penalty (Bolton) 18 minutes; Keen (Luton) 26 minutes; Greaves (Bolton) 37

minutes; Wharton (Bolton) 63 minutes; Wharton, penalty (Bolton) 77 minutes; Macdonald, penalty (Luton) 89 minutes.

one stage Branston and Hulme looked locked in lusty combat as they rolled among a crowd of players all bickering like women in an Italian market place.

Ryan booked

John Ryan, who will have to watch his step after two bookings last season, had his name taken for aiming a kick at a Bolton man, and Bolton's Ritson received the same treatment for stupidly kicking the ball away when penalised.

On this showing the Town could be expected to have a fair season. They showed enough to give hope but they must not capitulate as they did when Wharton scored an easy-looking goal in the 63rd minute.

It signalled the end for Luton and signs of desperation crept in when Branston almost picked up and threw aside Byrom in the 77th minute to prevent him scoring. This gave Wharton his second penalty from which he completed the first hat-trick of the new season.

It was of little gratification to anybody except Macdonald that he scored from a penalty himself after Jimmy Ryan was tripped in the last minute.

By then it was all over.

TEAMS: Bolton Wanderers: Clarke; Ritson; Farrimond; Williams, Hulme, Rimmer; Wharton, Byrom, Hunt, Greaves, Taylor. Sub: Jones.

Luton Town: Starling; Slough, John Ryan; Hoy, Branston, Moore; Jimmy Ryan, Givens, Macdonald, Keen, Busby. Sub: Bannister.

Referee: Mr John Yates (Red-ditch).