HULL CITY 0 LUTON TOWN 2

IT'S AMAZING the difference one man can make. Luton coach Jimmy Andrews came back to work last week and immediately Luton Town looked a different side. On Saturday they shook off the blues of recent matches, and with Jimmy back at the helm, they strolled past fancied Hull to chalk up a comfortable away win

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Afterwards Mr Andrews told me: "I think one or two things had gone a bit slack. We have worked very hard during the past week to put them right, and it's paid off.

"Our trouble was in the middle of the field. Chris Nicholl spotted it actually. The middle three were playing too wide, and when one of them went forward, the opposition were able to come through us quite easily."

Jimmy demonstrated with a couple of salt pots, a glass and an ashtray as if here a general about to go into battle, on a dining table in the Hatters' Special as we roared back to Luton with the triumphant Luton players singing their heads off at the other end of the compartment.

"You see," he explained, doubling back with the pepper over an imaginary halfway line," we were not giving each other cover as we went forward.

"Today it was different. Everyone was working for everyone else. We were more close knit. It helped that everyone was in form, but every time a Hull forward had the ball, he had to beat two men. They never really looked like scoring."

And with the Battle of Boothferry relived, Jim rejoined the players to start talking about next week. Carlisle are the visitors, and every foray has to be differently planned.

There was certainly a new look about Luton on Saturday. Hull were above them in the Second Division before the match, and everyone thought Luton were in for a tough time. But it was easy. Luton controlled the middle of the field where Keen, Court and Hoy were outstanding, and as a result Hull were made to look punchless plodders rather than promotion prospects.

Hoy, Court and Keen moved up and down the action together like a swarm of locusts, eating up everything that came their way. One minute they were helping the attack — the next the defence.

There was a lot more willingness about this Luton. With Nicholl and Moore unbeatable at the back, Luton were able to concentrate on going forward for most of the time. Luton went ahead after 11 minutes when Givens, who is chasing Macdonald for scoring honours, nipped in between Beardsley and goalkeeper McKechnie to intercept a soft back pass and net.

That was after 11 minutes, and 17 minutes later Givens collected a Jimmy Ryan pass and flipped it across the goalmouth for Macdonald to nod in his 16th goal of the season.

Teasing

With these two out-thinking and out-pacing Terry Neill and his wobbly defence, Luton looked like having a field day. Before half-time both went close again, and both did so twice in the second half.

Jimmy Ryan, whose crosses were not always exact, did his share of teasing, and worked well when he fell back in the second half as Luton decided to settle for what they had achieved in the first.

At full-back Alan Slough showed brightly with some superb skill and anticipation, while John Ryan, facing the best Hull forward in Ian Butler, gave his usual wholehearted performance and was always willing to overlap and join in the teasing of the Hull defence.

In goal Tony Read looked more assured, and apart from a fumble in each half — both in difficult situations — he gave a good account of himself. His biggest strength was his safe handling under pressure in the air.

This was the one Luton had to win to draw back their air of respectablity which had been lost in recent weeks.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Hoy, Nicholl, Moore; Jimmy Ryan, Court, Macdonald, Keen, Givens. Sub: Busby.

HULL CITY: McKechnie; Beardsley (Banks), Devries; Wlkinson, Neill, Simpkin; Holbrook, Houghton, Chilton, Wagstaff, Butler.

Referee — Mr David Laing (Preston).

Attendance — 18,343.

Goals: Givens (Luton 11) Macdonald (Luton 28).