

Mac leads super fight

70/71

Luton 3, Carlisle 3: By DENIS FOSTER

LUTON, three down with only seventeen minutes left, struck back in sensational fashion to salvage an apparently impossible point.

Carlisle were mastering the rain-sodden conditions better and playing with justified confidence when the dramatic recovery was launched.

A shot from Nicholl hit the bar, MacDonald's stab from the rebound was partially blocked on the line, and Jimmy Ryan slid the loose ball home.

Two minutes later defender Slough ranged up with a speculative effort which left keeper Ross helpless.

The odds were still heavily on Carlisle when in injury time ever-trying MacDonald showed why he is the Second Division's leading scorer.

He seized on a half chance

in a goalmouth melee to slot in his seventeenth goal of the season.

To crown it all, Luton nearly landed a winner. With the referee already looking at his watch, only a superb save by Ross kept out another piece of MacDonald enterprise.

Credit Luton for a superb recovery, but, frankly, it should not have been necessary.

OFF-TARGET

Though Carlisle were workmanlike and confident, Luton's normally sure sharpshooters were way off target in the first half.

Carlisle, with fewer chances, made so much more of them and went two ahead in seventeen minutes.

First came a great 25-yard drive by overlapping defender Hemstead and then a

Balderstone free-kick from the edge of the penalty area swerved wickedly through the defensive wall.

Luton put everything into attack after the interval but after ten minutes their cause seemed completely lost.

Dangerman H a t t o n nodded down a cleverly-flighted Balderstone corner and Martin pivoted like a ballet dancer to flick the ball between keeper and post with impudent ease.

Carlisle can feel thankful they will meet few sides with half of Luton's fight.

MacDonald, facing a canny opponent in Winstanley, and Givens missed easy chances early on. Yet they never gave up in ninety minutes of non-stop effort.

Keen lived up to his name in leadership while Jimmy Ryan always caused problems down the right.