

Luton get the luck —and the points

Luton 2 Portsmouth 1: by PETER GILL

PORTSMOUTH deserved at least one point in this undistinguished game which was dominated by both defences. Luton's winner was a lucky one. It came five minutes after half-time when Don Givens made a speculative attempt from more than 25 yards.

Had the ball continued on its original flight John Milkins, who had performed bravely and competently, would have had it covered. Instead it struck someone in the ruck of players inside the penalty area and flew off into the net to leave the goalkeeper stranded.

At the start Luton looked as though they would power their way to another handsome victory because with their striking force, reinforced by Viv Busby, they had the Portsmouth defence in trouble.

Portsmouth conceded several free kicks when under pressure and from one, in the seventh minute, Mike Keen pushed the ball to John Ryan who rammed it into the net.

But Luton's lead lasted only a minute following a fine bit of opportunism by their former player, Albert McCann.

After that Luton seldom recaptured their usual attacking rhythm. They were too frequently caught in possession by the hard-tackling Portsmouth defenders and there was a specially close watch on Malcolm MacDonald.

Packed

Only rarely was MacDonald able to get in a clear shot at goal, so well did Portsmouth pack their penalty area.

Brian Bromley and Nick Jennings showed some neat approach work for Portsmouth which was not matched by the forwards' finishing.

Luton had a commanding centre half in Chris Nicholl but they were not helped when John Moore did not return for the second half because of injury. He was replaced by Jack Bannister.

Portsmouth had their troubles, too. George Ley was led off just before half-time with a gash over the right eye that needed three stitches. Mike Travers took his place.

LUTON.—Read: John Ryan, Slough. Hoy, Nicholl, Moore, J. Ryan, Givens, MacDonald, Keen, Busby. Sub: Bannister.

PORTSMOUTH.—Milkins; Hand, Ley, Piper, Blant, Monks, McCann, Trebilcock, Hiron, Bromley, Jennings. Sub: Travers.