

The luck of the Irish. . .

LUCKY Luton. The Town gave an uncertain display, especially in defence, but won two points through a deflected goal from Irishman Don Givens.

Two goals in a minute early in the first-half left the sides level for most of a somewhat disappointing afternoon. In the first-half especially, the Luton defence was as full of holes as a fisherman's net.

This was partly because Moore was not fully fit, and struggled throughout the first 45 minutes.

He was hauled off at half-time, and Bannister substituted. The result was a more organised rearguard in the second-half.

But Luton's change from 4-3-3 to 4-2-4 did not make the difference I expected. I felt Court might have made a big difference in midfield.

Both Ryans, Hoy and Moore were guilty of bad distribution on several occasions. Busby put his heart into the job and worked tremendously hard, but he is obviously short of first-team practice.

John Ryan put Luton ahead from a free kick, but former Town player Albert McCann was given loads of room to equalise a minute later.

It was not until the second half that Luton's luck changed.

Keen was Luton's best player, putting in another tremendous performance.



Luton goal scorer Don Givens screens the ball neatly from this aerial attack as Macdonald provides cover

Givens grabs winning goal

Luton 2 Portsmouth 1

LUTON continue to knock on the door of Division One — thanks to a 2-1 win over Portsmouth at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. But their unconvincing display was more of a timid tap than the loud hammerings of recent weeks. They had to rely on a lucky, deflected goal by Don Givens to assure them of both points.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

There was a surprise before the kick-off when David Court, dropped from the team that played last week and named as substitute for today's match, was left out of the final 12 by Town manager Alec Stock.

The reason for this apparently was that although Moore was said to be fit after last week's injury, Bannister could give him cover if necessary.

The only other change in the Luton side was the switch in the inside-forward positions of Keen and Givens. Portsmouth were unchanged.

Welcome

Today's match was televised by London Weekend for tomorrow's ITV Big Match programme, with Brian Moore the commentator. Jimmy Hill was in the stand to watch the game and add his comments.

There was a rousing welcome for the Australian tourists who Luton meet on Monday. They took their seats to the strains of Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport.

Viv Busby, who came in on the left wing in place of Court, got off to a flying start. Macdonald raced through the middle and found Busby with a perfect pass.

The winger put it straight back into the goalmouth and Milkins, who had been given a sporting welcome by the Oak Road end, made a timely interception at the feet of Macdonald.

And it was the Macdonald-Busby duo who were responsible for Luton's next attack. But Milkins fisted Macdonald's accurate centre off Jimmy Ryan's head.

Luton could have been in trouble when Piper pumped over a fine centre, but Nicholl headed the ball away from the in-rushing Hiron.

The match was only eight minutes old when it burst into life with two goals in a minute — one for each side.

Luton went ahead after Busby had been fouled on the edge of the penalty box. Keen slipped the ball to John Ryan

who hit a low first-time shot into the corner of the net with Milkins obviously unsighted.

Portsmouth hit back straight from the restart. Former Town forward Albert McCann took advantage of some slack marking in the penalty box to hit a low shot past Read.

The Luton attack lost its edge for a spell, but after a long throw on the right Jimmy Ryan popped up with a header which went into the side netting.

Then Givens was brought down by a late tackle from Hand. His shot, following the free kick, went just over the top.

Luton had another chance when Jimmy Ryan put over a low free kick after a foul by Ley. Keen dummied over the ball and it went to Macdonald, who seemed taken by surprise and missed what was only a fleeting chance.

In the 22nd minute, Jimmy Ryan got in another header which went close. As he and Ley went up for the ball, there was a nasty clash of heads. Both had to receive lengthy attention before carrying on.

McCann was having a good game in front of his old crowd and when he got in a short pass to Trebilcock, the former Everton inside forward got in Portsmouth's first shot for a long time, but Read saved easily.

Suspect

The Luton defence looked very suspect at times, and an appalling mix-up between Nicholl and Moore ended up with Hiron breaking free for goal.

He was stopped by a rugby tackle from John Moore, who was lucky to get away without a caution. McCann's free kick was stopped by the Luton wall.

Almost immediately afterwards Luton had a claim for a penalty turned down when Macdonald was bowled over by Blant on the edge of the box.

Luton's defence got into another terrible tangle when Moore let the tricky Trebilcock go past him and the Town were lucky to get away with a corner after a good shot from Bromley was deflected.

Both Hiron and Trebilcock went near for Portsmouth as the Luton defence continued to give their supporters palpitations.

Troubled

Luton came back into the picture when a long throw from Hoy was headed on by Keen. But Macdonald nodded just over the bar.

Ley, still troubled by his earlier injury, had to have more treatment on the touchline. And Portsmouth decided to send on substitute Travers.

Immediately afterwards — in the 40th minute — Trebilcock again slipped past John Ryan, and Read saved from long range.

Substitute Travers was soon in the picture — he blatantly tripped Jimmy Ryan and duly received a caution from the referee.

HT: Luton 1, Portsmouth 1

Moore, who had obviously been worried by his injury in the first half, did not appear for the second. He was replaced by Jack Bannister, who moved straight to his familiar left-back position with Slough covering for Moore.

The second half was greeted by a scrap between rival fans in the Bobbers Stand and a posse of policemen moved in to sort things out.

Meanwhile, Macdonald had a shot blocked before getting over a good cross to Keen, who headed wide after making ground to get into a good position.

Luton went ahead with a lucky goal in the 52nd minute. It started with a promising attack sparked by Keen. Givens unleashed a low drive

MATCH FACTS AT A GLANCE

TEAMS

Luton: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Hoy, Nicholl, Moore; Jimmy Ryan, Givens, Macdonald, Keen, Busby.

Sub: Bannister.

Portsmouth: Milkins; Hand, Ley; Piper, Blant, Munks; McCann, Trebilcock, Hiron, Bromley, Jennings. Sub: Travers.

Referee: Mr J. Thacker (Scarborough).

GOALS

JOHN RYAN (Luton) 8 mins
McCANN (Portsmouth) 9 mins

GIVENS (Luton) 52 mins

Attendance: 16,876

from more than 20 yards Milkins went down on one knee to get behind the ball, but it deflected off Munks and flew over the unlucky goalkeeper's head into the net.

Mature

Luton tried to step up the pace, and two efforts by Keen and another by Busby indicated more determination up front.

The town were now playing more mature football and with Keen having a splendid game in midfield, they took on a more goal-hungry look.

But the Town were still guilty of a lot of bad passing, with John Ryan and Hoy being involved more than once.