

TOWN BOOST AWAY RECORD

Cardiff City 0 Luton Town 0

WHAT A GOOD point this was at Cardiff for the Town. But it was not all beer and skittles. Luton were pushed back for long periods, and had it not been for the magnificent form of Tony Read in goal and the Welshmen's lack of striking power, Luton could have been struggling.

Striker Don Givens summed it all up in the bar on the train coming home, when he went up to the Luton goalkeeper and said: "Thanks for my bonus, Tony."

It was not a match for the faint-hearted. There was a lot at stake and, as a result, a deal of over-anxiety from both sides, who were hampered by a mire of a pitch.

Cardiff were on top for lengthy periods in midfield, and Read, and the four in front of him — John Ryan, Nicholl, Slough and Bannister — were kept busy. Only the highest praise can be paid to Luton's back line of defence for their stubborn bravery.

Biggest gate

It was not great stuff to watch, but it was never as slow as the Cardiff telephone exchange. Even so, there was a deal of unrest in the 26,000 crowd, Cardiff's biggest of the season.

Still, Luton were not interested in entertaining Cardiff's populace — intent only on pillaging a point. And this they did in a purely professional way.

There was little idea of a Luton attack. Indeed Macdonald, Givens and Jimmy Ryan had often to drop back to help out in the middle. Up

front Macdonald, who often had to go it alone against a bruising defence, collected only a black eye for his trophy shelf.

And afterwards one member of the Luton squad commented: "If that centre-half tackles like that against Real Madrid (in the European Cup-Winners' Cup), there will be a serious rift in diplomatic relations between Spain and Wales."

Too close

His crude tackling on Macdonald, usually from behind, was not even disguised for the benefit of lenient referee Ivan Smith from Accrington.

Luton's best shot of the match came in the second half from full-back John Ryan, who slammed a 30-yarder against the inside of the angle of the posts. It came out — and away went Luton's chance of a second point.

In the middle of the field Roger Hoy did well to quash

the threat from the Bluebirds' expensive Ian Gibson. Hoy never left his side, and at times he got too close and the referee had to have a quiet word.

Court had a hard-working afternoon, and Mike Keen again did well. His effort as skipper is a real example to the rest of the side.

This was the first time Cardiff have been held to a goalless draw at home this season — and the crowd did not like it. They howled for Nicholl to leave the field when he had to have mud wiped from behind his contact lenses by trainer Reg Game.

The Luton trainer said afterwards: "This is a most unusual thing to happen. I had to get the mud out and put more oil on the lens. But it's the second time it's happened to me. I had to do it for Bedford goalkeeper Jock Wallace when I worked over there."

There were no serious

knocks in the Luton camp, and manager Alec Stock said he can see the same side lining up against Sheffield United, perhaps Luton's biggest rivals for promotion, at Kenilworth Road next Saturday.

Reputation

A lot will depend on the fitness of Moore, who had to miss the trip to Wales. But I cannot see Jack Bannister losing his place. He did a good job, and shares in the honours with the rest of the Luton back five.

The Town are getting quite a reputation on their travels. They have won three and drawn four of their nine away games.

For Cardiff Bobby Woodruff did well in attack and Mel Sutton was outstanding in midfield.

Ken Goodeve was named as a last minute substitute by Luton, Mr Stock wanting a defender in reserve rather than the attacking John Collins, who also travelled.