

LUTON TOSS

but injury to Hoy is disrupting

Luton Town 1 Charlton Athletic 1

LUTON scored another deep scratch on the veneer of their once-so-bright promotion hopes on Saturday when they struggled to a home draw against the Londoners from the bottom of the League. You don't do that sort of thing if you have First Division aspirations.

But, to be fair to Luton, they had some rotten luck. They were just starting to play some fine football when Roger Hoy had his nose broken and had to leave the field for stitches.

He came back bravely to continue with "yards" of wadding up his nose to stop the bleeding and he had trouble with his breathing from then on.

This upset Luton's rhythm. And in the second half there was more than that upset them when they had three legitimate-looking penalty appeals ignored by the referee, who angered the crowd intensely when he awarded Charlton a penalty for a strong tackle by John Ryan on Peacock.

One can understand Luton's frustration.

Town manager Alec Stock said afterwards: "I sometimes think I can't understand referees."

Went and Bruck both handled in their own box and Shipperley hauled Givens off the ball in the most ungentlemanly fashion when he was about to score.

But none of that broke any ice with Mr Clive Thomas, from South Wales. Though on other things he was far too pedantic for my liking and for much of the time got up the crowd's back.

Too slow

Suddenly finding themselves trailing to Went's penalty was like falling into an icy pool for Luton. It shook them rigid and snapped them out of their lethargy. They had always tried to play good football but their build-up was too slow.

There were 22 minutes left in which to redeem themselves after Went's goal which Read, who went the right way, was unlucky not to save.

At this point Hoy was forced to leave the field and Busby got his first chance for a long time. And what a difference he made. He shook the attack into life and threatened to win the match on his own.

By

ROGER DUCKWORTH

Macdonald and Givens were having appalling luck as they mounted an all-out attack on Wright's goal but the ball would never run for them and in spite of excellent service from Anderson and Jimmy Ryan nothing would go right.

Slough, John Ryan and Keen all joined in and the Charlton goal had more luck than a pools winner. The question must be asked: Why do Luton often wait until they are in trouble to really start playing?

Anderson laid on a goal for Busby and all he had to do was to nod his head at the ball as it travelled across the empty goal. He nodded too late and missed it.

Macdonald and Givens both went close again before Jimmy Ryan crossed from the left for Mike Keen to head the ball back intelligently into the thick of the action for Busby to make amends and head home.

Individually Luton were not all that bad. Jimmy Ryan and Anderson again played a dual role in attack and midfield and both did well.

Hoy was hard despite his disability and in the second half was booked for a tough tackle on Peacock. You can't blame the ref for that.

Bruck was also booked for kicking the ball away from a free kick and Wright for arguing with Mr Thomas.

Nicholl and Moore were both steady in the back four but once in the first half Moore slipped on an icy patch and let in Plumb for an open goal. He lashed the ball high and wide and the effort must vie with Busby's for the miss of the century.