

Busby adds sharpness to Town's attack

SO CLOSE TO A VICTORY

CARLISLE UNITED 0, LUTON TOWN 0

BADLY, the Town needed some reward from this tough assignment, and they prepared for it just as thoroughly as if it were an important cup-tie, even to the point of travelling with 15 players and delaying a team decision until Saturday morning.

Even though the players did not need reminding of their failure against Oxford United, there was plenty of exhortation and something in the nature of a late pep talk from manager Alec Stock.

As a result of it all, the team went out to give a determined, hard-fighting display that thoroughly earned them a point and, if they had

LINE-UP

CARLISLE UNITED: Ross; Hemstead, Gorman; Ternent, Winstanley, Bowles; Barton, Martin, Owen, Train, Balderstone. Substitute: Webb.

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Keen, Nicholl, Moore; Wainwright, Court, Halom, Givens (Hindson), Busby. Referee: J. Wrennall, Chorley. Attendance: 8,731.

that slice of luck in front of goal that has scarcely been running their way in recent weeks, they could have had both.

Main interest, of course, centred on the re-appearance of Busby after his comparatively brief flirtation with life in the First Division.

He wanted to mark his return with a goal, if he could, and in my view, he was desperately unlucky to be deprived in the eighth minute.

Long cross

It was the product of a move that demonstrated only too well the value of the long, accurate cross-field pass. It was made by Court

must have been current at that time, was the encouraging knowledge that the defence was covering well and that members of it were correctly placed to deal with any emergency.

With Carlisle having had their fling, the Town suddenly found rhythm and the opportunity to move forward, and Busby, going through purposefully, was brought down rather less than a yard outside the penalty area.

First corner

Thirty-two minutes had gone before the Town gained their first corner, which was the forerunner of four in five minutes, which demonstrated the way in which play had swung in their favour.

During this period, much of their football, with the ball being moved crisply, was admirable, and they really looked a side with some class and substance.

What they needed was a goal, and Slough, in much more adventurous mood than in some recent matches, tried his best to gain it with an accelerating run, at the



David Court shone in the Town's midfield work.

Of course, it has become commonplace to mention that Nicholl was outstanding, but it is unavoidable because he maintains a remarkably high rate of consistency week after week.

Once again, he dominated the middle with more able assistance on this occasion from Moore, now that he is over the effects of injury.

Decisive

Apart from the disconcerting way in which the ball kept crossing the Town goal in the first half, clear-cut openings for Carlisle were kept to a minimum, and both Ryan, quick and decisive, and Slough, playing at his best, were key-men in the defence.

Read certainly had an uncomfortable first half, but to offset that he made several excellent saves.

Even though he was a little tentative at times, it was a good move to bring Wainwright in among the middle three. For one thing he brought poise and constructive ability to bear and, on this showing, he could be due for an extended run, and deservedly so.

Over the last three or four months, the improvement achieved by Court has been quite remarkable and again he was in the thick of things, tackling hard and always willing to press forward, while Keen completed an effective middle three.

Of Busby, I am happy to report that he looked sharp and confident, always showing a willingness to make straight for goal, which was a welcome sight after the somewhat devious approaches the Town have been making in this respect.

Maybe he could have used more of the ball but, obviously, there will be a better supply of this for him in a home match, and he could well be the answer to the Town's most besetting problem.

Halom's role

Attempts are being made to try to get Halom to be

By ERIC PUGH

and sent Givens racing through. His centre was headed downwards by Halom and, acting decisively, Busby drove the ball past Ross.

Immediate thoughts were that it was as good a goal as could be imagined, but a linesman thought otherwise because his flag was upraised and the referee disallowed the goal, presumably for offside.

Afterwards, the Town were still racking their brains to find a feasible reason and the only conclusion that was arrived at was that Busby could not possibly have infringed and that it might have been against Court, who was not interfering with the play at that stage.

No nonsense

With a stiff breeze behind them, the Town had given an early indication that they were in a no-nonsense mood and, before the game was two minutes old, Ross, the former Luton player, had been in serious action, dealing with shots by Court and Givens.

With Bowles and Owen doing most of the probing, Carlisle began to produce some anxiety in the Town defence. They were similar in style to the Town, in that they moved the ball well in midfield, which was not easy on a pitch of gluepot texture.

Somehow or other, Read could not seem to get to grips with several crosses. There was one occasion when, from a corner, the ball struck Court, standing on the line, and Moore did some-

end of which he produced a shot that brought Ross to his knees at the foot of the post.

Never was there anything of a static nature about the play, and it swung in Carlisle's favour again immediately after the interval, when the first 10 minutes brought them six corners, all of which were unproductive.

Plugged

At that time, Bowles was tending to find space for himself on the extreme left, but once the Town plugged that, the danger lessened.

There was one occasion when the bravery of Read saved a difficult situation, even though he did not get a touch to the ball, because he dived in between Martin and Owen as both closed in to try to meet a centre by Balderstone.

Again the Town began to press forward, and Busby showed much determination in a long run and a shot from a narrow angle which caused Ross some concern.

However, that was nothing to the trouble experienced by the goalkeeper in dealing with a tremendous drive from Court from all of 25 yards after he had beaten two defenders. Only Ross's brilliance deprived Court of what would have been a deserved success.

Givens off

With nine minutes left, Givens, who had received a slight knock, was called off in favour of Hindson, but, as is usually the way of things at such a late stage the ex-

Tony Simmons, the Luton United cross country star, retained his Eastern Region title in the championship held on Saturday. See story on opposite page.

At Electricity Club, I Smith in charge; J Reynolds (High Town) charged; J Hughes (S PK); D Bailey (B Hill) v W Mculloch (Rang); D Reid (S PK) v J Goodtree (Rang); R Youngman (Rang) v D McKenzie (Bob); W Poulton (BHBC) v J McChrystal (LAESC); E Clump (BH) v W Blokhman (High Town).