

Garner stakes claim to that No 5 shirt

By GRAHAM COLLYER

IF ALAN GARNER turns in more performances like the one on his first-team debut on Saturday, the Luton fans will be hailing a new star. That is my prediction after the former Millwall youngster's appearance at Kenilworth Road.

Garner has waited patiently all season for his chance in the Town side, and when his planned debut at Swindon the previous Saturday was postponed his immediate thought must have been one of despondency.

Luton had bought John Faulkner on the day they sold Chris Nicholl for £100,000, but Garner was given the nod because of his consistency in the Midweek League.

But manager Alec Stock kept the side together for Saturday's game and Garner turned in a cracking display.

Afterwards both Stock and chief coach Jimmy Andrews were quick to sound their praises, and when I asked the manager about Faulkner, he said: "They are going to have to fight for the place."

Faulkner, who made his debut for the Town in a

friendly at Maidenhead last week, will play against Dunstable in tomorrow night's Bedfordshire Professional Cup at Kenilworth Road.

Thomas injury

The 8,490 spectators, Luton's lowest crowd of the season, had plenty to shout about, especially in the second half when Luton played some of their best football of 1972.

There was no doubting Luton's right to the two points, but I wonder how much difference the loss of Burnley's brilliant midfield player David Thomas made to the game.

England Under-23 international Thomas had a great first half but took a knock on an already sore ankle and did not reappear for the second half.

Burnley lost a lot of their creative skill in the second half, but this should not detract from Luton's contribution to an exciting 45 minutes.

LUTON 1 BURNLEY 0

Luton's wingers, Jimmy Ryan and Don Givens, gave the impression of lacking in confidence — Ryan found it necessary to check himself when in possession so that he invariably lost the ball — but Peter Anderson led the front line in a brave, wholehearted style.

Luton have never replaced Macdonald, and it is difficult to imagine they will in the future. Halom was bought to fill the gap but failed to score goals, and Stock had tried others before giving Anderson a chance.

A relief

Anderson it was who turned the ball back from the bye-line for Viv Busby to score the winner. And what a relief that goal was — both for Luton and for Busby.

It wasn't a classic goal but it was a goal to remember. It gave Luton a win for the first time in eight League games.

For Busby it signalled the end of 37 minutes of almost

continuous mistakes as he tried too hard to put things right and please the crowd. But when the ball was prodded in from almost no range at all Busby was forgiven. And he began to play better.

Burnley so nearly equalised just on half-time when Don Shanks put the ball into the path of Thomas, but the magnificent Keith Barber threw himself to his right to save.

It was just one of young Barber's string of first-class saves, and it is hard to see him losing his place again to the experienced Tony Read.

In defence John Ryan was the better of the full-backs, and Alan Slough struck up a useful understanding with Garner as a double centre-half.

David Court was the pick of the midfield three and both he and Keen contributed a lot. Givens, on the other hand, had an unhappy game, made even worse by a first-half booking for dangerous play.

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