

Verdict

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

JOHN RYAN is Luton's man-of-the-moment to-night.

Today he went into the midfield position in which everyone has been wanting to see him play and he banged in two goals as Luton coated to an easy away win at Portsmouth.

Before the match Ryan was full of confidence for the job and said he fancied his chances of scoring goals.

It was no idle threat. In the 31st minute he smashed a header past a bemused-looking Milkins to follow a 15th-minute penalty by Givens.

With the Luton defence looking solid there was little threat from Portsmouth and for half an hour Luton turned on one of their best performances with Givens playing some bright football and with Keen, Wainwright and Ryan controlling the midfield.

The role which Halom played must not be overlooked. He was full of ideas and was always willing to run the gauntlet with Portsmouth centre-half Youlden, who was handing out some heavy treatment to the Luton attack.

It was a shot from Halom which produced Ryan's second goal. It was blocked by a defender and Ryan smashed in the rebound for his second goal.

In defence Garner played some well-controlled football.

DYNAMO RYAN SINKS POMPEY

PORTSMOUTH 0 LUTON 3

JOHN RYAN, revelling in his roving commission, drove Luton to victory with two great goals after Givens had scored from a penalty.

The interesting point about Luton's line-up at Fratton Park was that John Ryan had once again been pushed into a midfield position.

After his good show in a similar position against Blackpool in the second half of last week's match, he was again given the green light and told: "Cover every blade of grass."

With Viv Busby falling ill during the week, Gordon Hindson, who has been out of favour for some weeks, returned to the left wing.

Portsmouth were unchanged. Eoin Hand had not recovered from a back injury which he received after slipping in the dressing room on to the edge of the bath and was out for the second successive week.

Scramble

John Ryan was in Luton's attacking action straight from the start and in the opening seconds he ran towards the penalty area in possession and was fouled by Pompey skipper Billy Wilson.

Slough to the free kick and after a bit of a rumpus in the goalmouth the ball bounced free towards Wainwright who might have scored had he been able to bring the ball down quicker. He couldn't — and Portsmouth scrambled to safety.

Luton progressed again in an ambitious start and a neat flick through from Givens was chased to the six-yard line by Halom. He was injured in a collision with goalkeeper Milkins and had to have treatment.

There was another injury in the sixth minute when Givens went down heavily after a tackle by Youlden. He was left prostrate for some considerable time until the ball went out of play, Mr Paget having ruled that it was no foul.

Givens looked in considerable pain as he was treated by Reg Game but he continued, limping heavily.

The first meaningful attempt at goal came in the tenth minute when Hiron dived to head a Collins centre well wide.

Five minutes later Luton were awarded a penalty after

By
ROGER DUCKWORTH

Blant had handled a Shanks centre. GIVENS put the ball on the spot and shot low past Milkins to give Luton a well-deserved lead.

In the 22nd minute Reynolds had a great chance to even the score but he shot wide from near the penalty spot with the Luton defence spreadeagled.

In the 31st minute Luton went further ahead. And what a good goal it was. Keen sent Givens through towards the left and the Town centre-forward looked over his shoulder to see who was there before crossing.

He saw John Ryan racing into the goalmouth, crossed and RYAN blasted the ball into the net with his head.

Reynolds was the brightest of the home forwards and in the 43rd minute he shot left-footed on the turn just wide of the angle of a post.

HT: Portsmouth 0, Luton 2

The first real action of the second half came when Youlden held off Givens and Luton were awarded a free kick. It was hit over by Shanks but the Luton attack was not well placed and Portsmouth cleared all too easily.

In the 52nd minute Givens smashed a superb left-foot shot into the net following an attractive move between Halom and Ryan. But he was given the offside flag — which to me looked rather doubtful.

Following this let-off the home crowd tried to spur their side on. The Pompey forwards surged forward but some solid defending by Moore and Keen kept them at bay.

In the 66th minute JOHN RYAN delightedly hammered in his second goal. There was a smooth build up between Halom and Givens and the clearance came from the goalmouth to Ryan who was waiting just to the left of the penalty spot. He shot first time and his low volley went under the body of the diving Milkins to put Luton three up.

During the second half Barber had to pick some objects out of the goalmouth which he threw into the back of the net.



Don Givens outclimbs the Portsmouth attack to take Luton out of danger

MATCH FACTS

PORTSMOUTH: Milkins; Smith, Collins; Blant, Youlden, Munks; Piper, Reynolds, Hiron, Wilson, Ley. Sub: Pointer.

LUTON: Barber; Slough, Shanks; Keen, Garner, Moore; Wainwright, Halom, Givens, Ryan (John), Hindson. Sub: Court.

Referee: Mr N. Paget (Coventry)

GIVENS, pen (Luton) 15mins

JOHN RYAN (Luton) 66mins

JOHN RYAN (Luton) 31mins

Attendance: 8,552