

SACKCLOTH!

72/73

LUTON TOWN 0
CARLISLE UTD. 1

IT was very much a case of "after the Lord Mayor's Show" at Kenilworth Road on Saturday, when the Town, after reaching the heights at Villa Park a week earlier, really plumbed the depths in suffering their third consecutive home defeat.

When previous points have been dropped at home, there has been the excuse for the Town that they had done enough to win, and could have done so comfortably with a little luck in their finishing. Lamentably that was not the case on Saturday.

Carlisle manager Alan Ashman told me: "We knew that Luton were worried about

By **ERIC NORRIS**

their home form, and we set out to take advantage of that."

They caught the Town ill at ease, and far removed from the confident outfit that had outplayed Aston Villa. By picking up midfield control and attacking from the start, they gave the home defence no time to get over the inexplicable attack of jitters that seems to beset them on their own ground.

Dennis Martin, Chris Balderstone and Joe Laidlaw spelt out an early warning to the Town with some swiftly-built attacks. Carlisle certainly belied their lowly position in the table, and Barber was the basier of the two goalkeepers as he made some timely saves from Martin and Laidlaw under considerable pressure.

It came as no real surprise when the Town defence were finally cracked open in the 28th minute for Carlisle to score the goal that was to give them their first away victory of the season.

It was fully deserved and well taken, and came from a free kick taken by Tiler. The kick was well placed to Martin, who intelligently nodded it on to OWEN, who gave Barber no chance with a 15-yard right-footed drive.

Tight defence

The Town fought hard to get back into the game after this, but Winstanley and the well-drilled, tightly packed Carlisle defence allowed them few openings, and they were restricted mainly to long-range shooting, which gave the former Town goalkeeper Allan Ross little trouble.

Luton's work was hurried, and they were not finding their men with the sureness that we saw at Villa. Jimmy Ryan, however, was working manfully to build up attacks down the right, and he did split the Carlisle defence with a good cross to Fern, who forced Ross to make a fine save with a well-placed header.

Yet, although the Town were enjoying more territorial advantage than earlier, they were still having anxious



DETERMINED Vic Halom harasses the Carlisle defence in a search for an elusive point-saving goal.

After the Lord Mayor's Show..

moments from the fast-breaking Carlisle forwards, and they had a narrow escape four minutes before half-time when a free kick, taken on the edge of the penalty area by Laidlaw, rebounded off the foot of a post.

After the interval there were signs that the Town at last intended to take the game by the scruff of the neck.

Once again, most of their effective attacks were being

Town defence again by sending Laidlaw through with only the goalkeeper to beat, but he drove straight at the advancing Barber, who smothered his shot.

Probably the Town's best chance to rescue a point came in the 64th minute, when a drive by Aston was blocked on the line, and the ball ran loose to Slough, who forced Ross to make a fine save.

In a bid to get more drive in midfield, the Town intro-

minute. Jimmy Ryan found himself a gap from a corner, but headed straight at Ross, who gathered the ball safely.

The brightest spot in this game from the Town point of view was the new flood-lighting, switched on for the first time for the second half.

Their powerful beams were certainly not matched by the play, but were equalled only by the smile on the face of Alan Ashman at the end when he said: "This was a great team effort. I would not like to single out any of my players. All the lads were great."

kidology" which he practised before the match, when he took the players out to lunch to make the pre-match routine more akin to that of away matches.

He might be on the right track here though, because I definitely feel that the form that has not brought a home victory since September 16 is rapidly becoming a state of mind. All that is needed, really, is some way to restore the team's confidence in themselves. When that happens the fans will get something in plenty to cheer about.

THE LINE-UP

LUTON TOWN: Barber; John Ryan, Thomson; Slough, Faulkner, Garner; Jimmy Ryan, Anderson, Fern, Halom (Goodeve), Aston.

CARLISLE UNITED: Ross; Derrett, Gorman; O'Neill, Winstanley, Tiler; Train, Martin, Owen, Balderstone, Laidlaw. Sub.: Delgado.

Referee: H. H. Davey, Nottingham.

Attendance: 10,091.

built up on the right wing through Jimmy Ryan, and he created havoc in the Carlisle defence with one centre towards the near post. Fern was only a fraction away from making contact with a diving header. Fern recovered as the ball was partially cleared off the line, and returned it to Ryan, whose effort was again blocked.

There was a lot of "hit or miss" about Luton's frenzied attacking. The more constructive moves were coming from Carlisle, and they had a fine opportunity to increase their lead when Martin, their most dangerous forward, opened up the

duced their substitute, Good-eve, in the 72nd minute, and took off Vic Halom. Good-eve went to his customary position in the back-four, allowing John Ryan to move up into midfield.

This was the move that came off well at Portsmouth, but on this occasion, although John Ryan was the pick of the Town team and played a real captain's part in both effort and example, there was seemingly nothing that could be done to break down the efficient Carlisle covering.

The Town's last gasp opportunity of getting on terms came in the 82nd

Bogy side

And that just about summed up the performance of the Cumberland side, who have always been something of a bogy to the Town at Kenilworth Road.

Town manager Harry Haslam, who once again stayed in the changing room for a lengthy talk to his players after the game, is certainly faced with a problem about the home form, which is becoming almost beyond belief.

It is incomprehensible that the team should go up and down in such a dramatic way from one week to the next, but Haslam admits that he has to find more drive down the left-flank to give the side better balance.

Sadly, he admits, too, the failure of his "little bit of