



Peter Grummitt saves as Town's John Aston races in.

Christmas sat too heavily

LUTON TOWN 0, SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 0

DESPITE the absence of public transport in Luton on Boxing Day, Luton's largest crowd of the season by a big margin, 15,799, turned up to see what should have been a real thriller against Sheffield Wednesday.

But they were doomed to disappointment, because the game was a real lack-lustre affair, grinding on monotonously with few goalmouth thrills to celebrate.

It is said to reflect that the biggest buzz of interest among the crowd was caused not by the players on the field, but by a handful of young hooligans who ran on to the pitch. There was a brief stoppage while they were quickly and efficiently rounded up by the police and shepherd away.

Both teams had had hard games on Saturday, when the Town were winning at Middlesbrough and Wednesday were drawing with promotion rivals Aston Villa.

Hangover

Whether we were seeing the hangover is anybody's guess, but the fact remains that the Town again did the lion's share of the attacking but lacked the teeth to snap up the Kenilworth Road victory that has eluded them since September.

Certainly this time gambol was not what the fans had come to see, though the Wednesday went home well pleased with their share of the spoils.

In fact, although they made fewer attacks, they had their chances to complete the double over the Town. Prendergast, their best forward, could have sewn it up had he shown a little more steadiness at the critical time.

The Town won two corners in the first 10 minutes, and before the second of these could be cleared they came close to a flying start when Jimmy

Ryan got in a cross which just eluded the onrushing John Aston as it flashed across goal.

Wednesday fought back, and Eustace had a shot blocked by Barber. The Town broke quickly from defence, and Halom went close with a good effort.

Little excitement

But exciting incidents were few and far between. The Town continued to dictate most of the play in mid-

THE LINE-UP

LUTON TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Thomson; Anderson, Garner, Myers; Jimmy Ryan, Fern, Bulfin, Halom, Aston. Substitute: Slough.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY: Grummitt; Rodrigues, Clements; Thompson, Holtgrave, Craig; Sunley, Eustace, Joicey, Prendergast, Royle. Substitute: Sinclair. Referee: M. P. Paget, Coventry. Attendance: 15,799.

field, and Grummitt, who was in superb form, was the busier of the two goalkeepers.

He did well to save a header by Halom, and also cut out another attempt by Aston.

At the other end, Wednesday's best effort of the first half came from a header by Sunley that Barber did exceptionally well to get down to and block.

One of the most noticeable and pleasing features about Barber's recent form has been the speed of his reaction, which has saved the Town a number of times.

With nine minutes to go to the

interval Fern tried to inject some much-needed urgency into the Luton attack, working his way cleverly through the pecked Wednesday defence to finish with a fine drive that Grummitt saved superbly.

Sunley was running strongly and trying to prod his Sheffield attack into action, and he gave Prendergast a chance, only to see him shoot hurriedly and wide.

Wednesday looked dangerous as the interval approached, and Prendergast was amiss when he headed over the top from a cross by Crain.

More good work by Fern had Wednesday in trouble again, but after some inter-passing with Aston, Fern's shot was deflected for a corner, which Wednesday had difficulty in getting away.

When they did, Sunley raced clear, and the Town defence was in a dangerous situation. However, the Wednesday man took too long to get in his shot, and some cool play by Garner got the Town out of trouble.

Best chance

Possibly the Town's best chance to beat the home jinx and gain their revenge came towards the close of the game when Grummitt made one of his few errors when he failed to hold a corner by Aston. The ball ran loose to Anderson, but in his haste he mis-kicked and it rolled wide of the post.

The goalkeeper was in trouble only once more, and that was when a low drive by Halom caught him unaware and rolled out of his hands.

These incidents apart, it was not a match to remember.

26-12-72