

AT LAST: A TOWN WIN AT HOME



THE TOWN have won at home at last. But what a struggle it was before they finally overcame Fourth Division minnows Crewe Alexandra to win a place in the next round of the cup.

And although the score was right for the Town, nothing much else was. For nearly an hour, it was another two-star, mediocre display, and the Town were lucky to be level at half-time.

Crewe had looked more like goalscorers than Luton, and when the match was an hour old I was gloomily thinking about a replay at Crewe.

The debut of Steve Litt, the 18-year-old who scored a hat-trick for the Reserves on Wednesday, did not have the desired effect, and for all his running and enthusiasm the Town could not find the goal standard.

With 20 minutes to go, the Town were well on top but Crewe were defending stubbornly and effectively, with just a little hint of panic now and again.

Litt, whose biggest failing had been in his over-eagerness to go for goal, thus leaving gaps in midfield, was pulled off to make way for Gordon Hindson and the Crewe defence finally fell.

But what a struggle

Bobby Thomson and John Aston combined to work a way down the left wing, and for once the Crewe defence was caught by a sucker punch. Aston's centre floated into the middle, and up popped Jim Ryan to compensate for a generally patchy performance by heading a superb goal from near the penalty spot.

It took the pressure off Luton, and also reduced the frustration that had been building up both on and off the field.

Six minutes later, Barry Butlin repeated the old one-two, connecting with a long cross from Alan Slough, and Crewe were sunk.

OUTPLAYED

They were left to go home with thoughts of what might

brian swain's SPORTS VIEW

It was by no means a classic match, but I rate it at three stars out of five if only because the team gave the club and the fans the answer to their biggest demands: the first home win for four months, and two good goals.

They were both beauties, and went some way towards rubbing out memories of the play that had gone on before them.

The Town's biggest problem seemed to be in the lack of confidence, and those goals ought to go a long way towards ending that.

Even more important, of course, they put the Town

Crewe flattened by the old one-two

JIM RYAN and Barry Butlin put the Town out of their agony with a pair of knock-out blows that ended Crewe's resistance.

Above: Butlin soars high to put in a bullet header for as good a goal as we have seen at Kenilworth Road this season.

Below: Jim is in there somewhere! Although Crewe's David Gillett was covering, Jim nipped in for the first goal of the game. Pictures by Geoff Garratt



LOSER'S despair: Crewe striker Terry Nicholl, younger brother of Chris, was being watched by a number of scouts, but he capped an undistinguished performance by collecting a booking for showing dissent.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN 2, CREWE ALEX 0

Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Barber, Shanks, Thomson, Slough, Garner, Moore, Jim Ryan, Litt (Hindson, 66 minutes), Butlin, John Ryan, Aston.

CREWE: Crudgington, Lowry, Kelly, Bradshaw, Nicholls, Peat, Tewley (Fairhurst, 76 minutes), Nicholl, Humphreys, Riley, Gillett.

GOALS: Jim Ryan for Luton, 71 minutes. Barry Butlin for Luton, 77 minutes.

REFEREE: W. S. Castle, Dudley: too shy about playing the advantage rule.

ATTENDANCE: 9,411.

ENTERTAINMENT: Better than last week.

72/73 (FAC)