

LUTON MAKE IT-BUT ONLY AFTER A FIGHT



LUTON TOWN 2 CREWE ALEXANDRA 0

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

72/73
(CAC)

LUTON won through to the fourth round of the FA Cup this afternoon — but what a struggle they had.

Goals from Jimmy Ryan and Barry Butlin, in the 72nd and 80th minutes, gave triumph to a Hatters' side which had turned in a dismal performance for most of the game.

Lowly Crewe had made the running from the start, and looked like crushing

RYAN STEPS DOWN

JOHN RYAN was relieved of the captaincy today after he went in to see manager Harry Haslam about a move.

Ryan, who has been under pressure from the crowd in recent matches asked the manager if he should make a move for the club's sake. But Mr Haslam told him no. "He is a great club man and I relieved him of the captaincy today so he could concentrate on his game," Mr Haslam said. Bobby Thomson took over as skipper.

VERDICT

CREWE's shoulders drooped when Luton scored two goals in eight minutes late in the game.

But until then any stranger at Luton would have had to ask which was the Fourth Division team and which was the Second.

For Crewe gave a splendid performance, showing more attacking ideas than Luton and often a deal more skill in midfield.

It looked as if Luton would be going to Crewe on Wednesday night for a replay until JIM RYAN headed the Town's first goal in the 72nd minute.

Until then Luton had given a poor account of themselves against their lowly but game opponents.

Eight minutes later BUTLIN nodded in Luton's second goal and the Town were home and dry. Not only did they end that dismal four months without a home win but, more important, they go into the draw on Monday — and at long last the club's supporters have something to look forward to.

Luton's performance was far from distinguished, but I thought Thomson and Moore did well at the back, as did keeper Barber.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Luton's Cup hopes most of the time.

Eighteen-year-old Steve Litt was given his chance of a lifetime when Luton manager Harry Haslam told him half an hour before the kick off that he was to make his debut in this afternoon's third round FA Cup-tie.

A quarter of an hour before the kick off the Luton boss called a dressing room press conference, to explain why he had left out midfield men Peter Anderson and Vic Halom.

"Anderson has been to see a specialist who has diagnosed a chronic abdominal stomach strain, and he has to have treatment on Monday. And Halom is rested," the Luton manager told me.

Back

Back in the side was Alan Slough, who has been substitute for a week or two, and Bobby Thomson was made captain.

Crewe showed bags of ambition in the opening minutes when they chased everything like terriers. But some of their tackling was a bit too ambitious too, and Butlin was brought down heavily in the centre circle by Gillett who, despite his No 11, was marking Butlin and playing in the middle of the back four.

A run by Butlin was halted by Riley, but he managed to get the ball out to Aston on the



Barry Butlin fails to beat the Crewe keeper

left. The winger's centre was blocked by full-back Lowry.

Under pressure from Tewley, Thomson did a good job in turning on the by-line and getting the ball back to his keeper.

After eight minutes Crewe very nearly went ahead. A defensive lapse by Luton let Centre-forward Humphreys through, and his low shot went just wide of the left-hand post of the Oak Road goal.

Crewe made more attempts at goal than Luton in the early stages, and a good show from full-back Lowry was cleanly caught under the bar by Barber.

And then a long shot from Humphreys was nodded on by Tewley, whose header was not all that far over the crossbar.

In reply, Jimmy Ryan sent Aston clear on the left and his centre was well caught by former Villa keeper Crudgington, with John Ryan bursting in for a header.

Panic

Luton began to show their hand in the 15th minute, when good centres from Thomson on the left and Jim Ryan on the right caused some panic in the Crewe goalmouth.

New boy Litt was working hard for Luton, and his first chance for a shot came after 18 minutes, but it was a long-range effort and soared into the Kenilworth terrace.

Crewe continued to be the more lively side and when a long through ball evaded Moore, nippy centre-forward Humphreys dashed through again and belted a hard shot into the side netting.

But Crewe hit straight back, and Moore was forced to foul

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber, Shanks, Thomson, Slough, Garner, Moore, Jimmy Ryan, Litt, Butlin, John Ryan, Aston. Sub: Hindson. CREWE: Crudgington, Lowry, Kelley, Bradshaw, Nicholls, Peat, Tewley, Nicholl, Humphreys, Riley, Gillett. Sub: Fairhurst. Referee: Mr W. S. Castle (Dudley) Attendance 9,411 JIM RYAN (LUTON) 72mins BUTLIN (LUTON) 80mins

Humphreys just outside the box. A quickly-taken free-kick by Peat should have brought a goal from Bradshaw, who scuffed the ball wide after taking possession in the goalmouth.

With Luton fumbling and stumbling, the Fourth Division side began to realise they were in with more than a chance, and another long shot from Peat almost fooled Barber and scraped the outside of the left-hand post.

Litt very nearly stole a debut goal for Luton in the 41st minute. He took a pass from the right, and fell back to execute an overhead kick which was just adrift of the top corner.

HT: 0-0

There were boos for Luton when they came out for the second half, while Crewe received a great big roar. This

was rather a silly attitude for the Luton supporters to take if they wanted their team to pull themselves together and win the match.

Trouble

But again it was the Fourth Division side who were first to show - even though Bradshaw's shot was about six crossbars too high.

Then Aston and Thomson tried to do something about it, but after some laboured work Thomson's cross went out of play. And a run from Litt ended with him running into trouble and being dispossessed.

Luton cleared a Humphreys corner from the right, but full-back Lowry cut in and tried a shot, which went wide.

The first time the trainer was needed was six minutes into the second half, when the Crewe man went on to attend to Lowry, who received a face injury in a collision with Butlin in the Crewe penalty box.

There was a burst of fervour from the Luton crowd when Shanks was brought down by Kelley near the corner flag. But Jimmy Ryan's free-kick was wasted when Butlin tried a back stealer at which went wide.

Tough

Luton continued to find the going tough, and when Butlin went clear on the right, his centre went behind the Crewe goal.

Good control by Litt and a pass out to Thomson on the left brought a good cross from the Luton full-back — and an equally good catch by Crudgington.

A move between Slough and Jimmy Ryan brought Luton's first corner after an hour, but Ryan's flag kick was easily caught by Crudgington.

And a minute later Butlin made an exciting run after a through ball. But he was adjudged to have used his hands as he fought off Nicholls, and Crewe cleared by way of a free kick.

At last Luton got that so vital goal. Good work between Thomson and Aston on the left brought a cross from Aston and JIMMY RYAN ran through the defence to head Luton into the lead.

With 16 minutes left, Nicholl was booked for an offence over on Luton's right wing. And at the same time Slough had to have treatment.

But there was still plenty of fight in Crewe, and the Town defence was at panic stations when a free kick from Peat flashed across the face of the goal. Thomson was injured in the resulting scrimmage.

In the 79th minute Crewe substitute Fairhurst went on in place of Tewley.

With ten minutes left Slough put over a splendid cross and BUTLIN leap high to steer it into the goal with his head.



Alan Slough tussles for the ball with a Crewe forward