

IT'S A 'DOUBLE' FOR THE TOWN

72/73

ANY "double" pleases a club, but Luton's latest — completed inside a fortnight — was something special. For it was against the side now led by their own former manager, Alec Stock.

The goal that won the points was scored by Jim Ryan, but it was manufactured by splendid midfield work. Luton might well have had more goals but for the fact that luck seemed to favour a sometimes loose Fulham defence.

Luton manager Harry Haslam stuck to the side he announced yesterday — which happened to be the one which beat Fiorentina in the Anglo-Italian Tournament during the week.

Former Luton manager Alec Stock was forced to make changes in the Fulham attack.

Les Barrett was missing from the left wing, so Les Strong moved over to this slot, making way for a midfield place for former club skipper Barry Lloyd.

Fulham kicked off in a strange manner. They had three men stationed on the left wing and the ball went back to former England man Alan Mullery, who belted it out to the left. But the best-laid plans come to nothing — and the ball went straight into touch.

Even so Fulham won the first corner on the right. Fern mishit his clearance but French was there to sort things out.

Chance

Luton almost went ahead in the seventh minute. A long centre from Shanks caused Went some problems, and good recovery work by Fern gave Aston a chance. He half-beat his man inside the penalty box but could not get into position to use his shot.

Some good football by

Fulham ended with a cross from the right being headed at goal by Strong. It was a good effort but Horn seemed confident as he watched it over the crossbar.

The first clear-cut shot of the match came in the ninth minute from Hindson. It was a strong effort and bounced awkwardly in front of Mellor, who went full length to take it well.

Grand footwork by full-back Callaghan took the ball off Hindson and his splendid left-foot cross won a corner off the head of Faulkner. French was involved in getting it clear.

Jim Ryan's good cross from the left caused the Fulham defence all sorts of problems, and French, Aston and Faulkner all had goalworthy efforts blocked in the confusion.

A good interception by Thomson stopped a Fulham clearance reaching Pinkney, but the Luton skipper's centre was too strong in the wind

and went straight out of play.

In the 18th minute Earle did well to cash in on a slip by Goodeve and get the ball across the face of the Luton goal. It found its way to Mullery but his shot went wide.

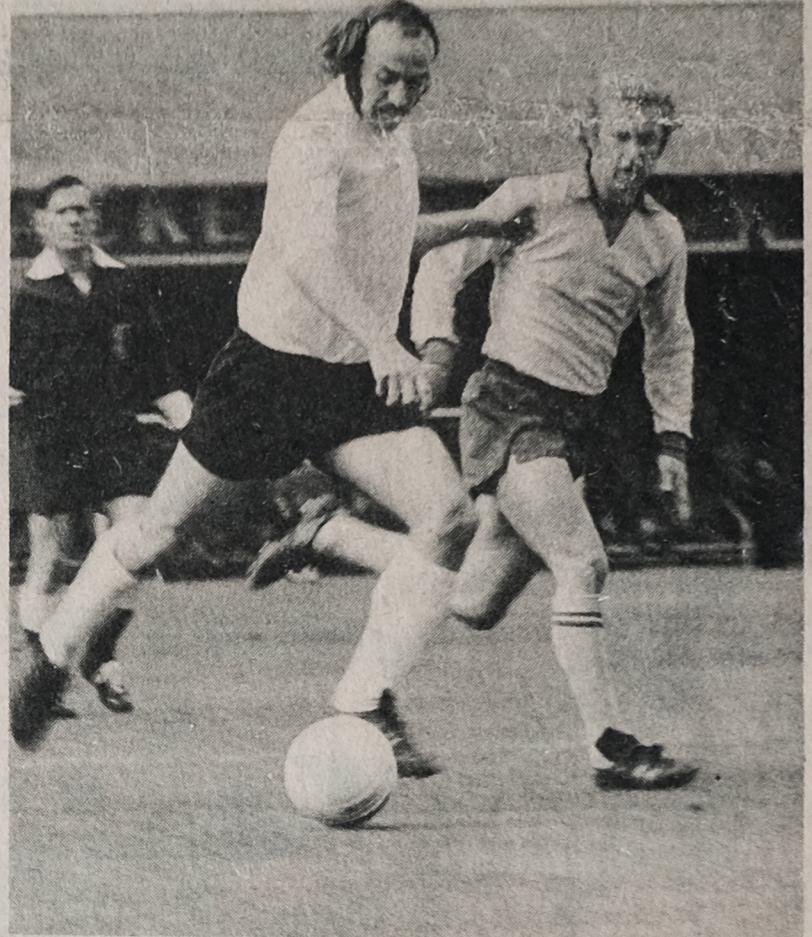
But Luton took the lead three minutes later with a splendid goal from JIM RYAN. A lot of the credit must go to Anderson, who fought for possession in midfield before sending Aston away on the left.

Panic

Aston put in a low centre and Ryan curled a first-timer over the head of Mellor with his left foot.

Then Fulham almost equalised in the 24th minute. A neat pass from Strong on the left found Earle, who went past Goodeve and hit a ground shot that went wide.

French had some bad luck in the 37th minute. A throw from Thomson was whipped inside



Rod Fern rounds a Fulham defender

by Aston into the path of French. French banged in a crisp shot which had Mellor beaten but it hit the right-hand post and bounced clear.

But the panic was not over for Fulham. Aston hit straight back and took the ball out of the path of French to crash in a splendid shot which full-back Callaghan somehow diverted over the crossbar.

Three minutes before the break Luton might have had another goal. After a rather aimless-looking move Anderson, who was having a grand game, took possession in midfield and cracked in a hard shot which went over the top — but only just.

Fulham tried to make ground through the middle but Faulkner got to a high-bouncing ball smartly to head it back to Horn. Then Thomson nipped in to rob Earle on the byeline and get the ball safely back to his keeper.

HT: 1-0

In the first minute of the second half Hindson got his head right over the ball and

LUTON: Horn, Shanks, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Goodeve, Jimmy Ryan, French, Fern, Hindson, Aston. Sub: John Ryan.
FULHAM: Mellor, Cutbush, Callaghan, Mullery, Went, Horne, Pinkney, Earle, Mitchell, Lloyd, Strong. Sub: Conway.
Referee: Mr H. New (Bristol)

JIM RYAN (Luton), 21 min
Attendance: 8,430

fired in a hard, low shot which Mellor did well to collect at full stretch.

Luton half and a pass inside from Mitchell was snapped up by Earle, who went close with a strong left-footer.

Fulham decided to make an early substitution, and in the 54th minute John Conway went on for Pinkney. Conway was soon in the action, and a neat lob into the Luton goalmouth produced a half chance for Strong but Faulkner cleared quickly.

With 15 minutes to go Horn made two magnificent saves from Earle but then nearly fisted a cross into his own net.



Jimmy Ryan (7) flies high to head Luton in front

VERDICT

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

FOR the second successive Saturday, a strong wind spoiled Luton's match. The difference was that today Luton won in spite of it.

And in the second half the Town did their best to ignore the conditions and played some splendid attacking football.

The trouble was that they couldn't accept the chances that were laid on from the wings.

Anderson eventually took control of the midfield, where he had a splendid

match, but the star was undoubtedly Graham French.

He produced a series of exciting runs in the second half which brought back memories of the old days at Kenilworth Road.

Scrappy spells

And the crowd would have gone mad if he had converted a chance of his own five minutes from the end after being sent on another run by Fern. But he chipped it over the top.

The match went through scrappy spells, but luckily these were always punctuated by periods of good attacking football in which Jim Ryan and Aston were often prominent for Luton.

Faulkner again did well in the heart of Luton's defence, but Fulham's Went did an equally good job on Fern.

But the Luton crowd were satisfied with the victory over former manager Alec Stock's Londoners.