

FINNEY IS TOWN'S HERO AGAIN

73/74

ATTACKING LUTON were out-attacked at Meadow Lane last night by a side motivated by fear. County had lost their three previous matches and when they were 1-0 down at half-time the fans and, I imagine, their manager had plenty to say about it.

They ran out to play some fast and furious football and Luton were driven back. The Town defence was like a brick wall with a boxful of rubber balls being thrown at it.

But the only error it made was to

By ROGER DUCKWORTH
Notts County 1 Luton Town 1

allow big Les Bradd to equalise.

With all their closest rivals collecting points in a busy evening, Luton actually dropped a couple of places in the Division Two table. But the draw means they have taken three points from three away matches — a most satisfactory start to the season.

Luton's hero was again Tom Finney, who scored the goal in the 23rd minute, diving through a leaden-footed defence to head in a Jimmy Ryan free kick. It was a similar goal to the one he scored against Carlisle.

That's four he's scored in three matches. And he almost got another in the second half when he shot on the

turn following a good pass from John Ryan.

Luton were just about worth their first half lead. They had more finesse about them than the Nottingham side, who played with more newly promoted vigour than skill.

It was a breathless sort of game. Luton tried to ease the pace and play their own sort of thoughtful football. But County were all thud and blunder, over-anxious to please their baying supporters.

Thus the Luton defence had a few disturbing moments. They found it no easy task to dictate in the middle of the field, though John Ryan showed perceptive reading of the game and his passing was outstanding, especially with the long ball.

In the end it was the centre-back men who saved Luton. John Faulkner was man of the match, closely chased by Garner, who also attacked in the set pieces and used his long throw to good effect.

Right-back Shanks also had a good night, mixing it with a will when necessary, but his piece de resistance came in the second half when he headed a Needham header off the line.

Aston, as well as John Ryan, put in a lot of fast runs on the wing but Butlin was tightly marked by the huge Needham and was not able to win much up top.

To be honest, I thought Luton were a bit lucky in the end. But they hung on and in the final minutes they had weathered the storm and were themselves attacking again.

County's goal came in the 54th minute. If Faulkner could be faulted it is only in that he was pushed off the ball and then beaten by the tricky Bradd, who caught him on the wrong foot, strode into the box and belted the ball past Horn's grasping right hand.

It was a rare mistake in a defence that is looking far more settled than it did for stretches of last season.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Horn; Shanks, Thomson; Anderson, Faulkner, Garner; Jimmy Ryan, John Ryan, Butlin, Finney, Aston. Sub: Cruse.

NOTTS COUNTY: McManus; Brindley, Worthington; Masson, Needham, Stubbs; Nixon, Randall, Bradd, Probert, Mann. Sub: Vinter.

Referee: Mr J. Wrennall (Ecclestone).

Attendance: 8,509.

Goals: Finney (Luton, 23 mins), Bradd (Notts County, 54 mins).