

LIGHTS CHAOS AS LUTON WIN

LUTON TOWN were today counting the profit in points rather than the cost in pounds of hiring a wonky generator which illuminated their 1-0 win over Cardiff.

For the £500 piece of machinery broke down after 16 minutes, and the players spent the next 40 minutes getting their breath back in the dressing rooms.

But it spluttered back into

life and Jimmy Ryan smacked in the goal that consolidates Luton in the third promotion place.

The Town must have been wondering, at one time, whether all the effort to hire the generator was worthwhile. For not only did it fizzle out, it failed to attract more than 7,000 supporters and annoyed the residents of Oak Road who called in the police about the noise.

Today, it is little more than a fading nightmare. Luton are two points to the good, and with another home match on Saturday — against Aston Villa — they are setting themselves up for their

Luton 1, Cardiff 0 By ROGER DUCKWORTH

happiest Christmas for years.

And in spite of all the aggro, the trouble commercial manager Dave Roberts went to, to hire the generator paid off today. As he said: "We didn't get the crowd, but we got the match and the result. We got two points, and that's what it's all about."

Luton secretary Bob Readhead was "disgusted" at the size of the gate — the smallest of the season at Kenilworth Road. "I can't understand this apathy — especially when we are so well placed in a promotion position," he said.

Now Luton count the bruises as they prepare for the Villa encounter. Centre-half John Faulkner received a bad kick on a knee in the second minute, and did well to carry on. Roy McCrohan wanted to pull him off, but manager Harry Haslam insisted that he carry on.

Jimmy Ryan also took a buffeting from some raw Cardiff tackling. But everyone is expected to make it for the weekend.

Character

After the match's long and unsettling disruption, which Cardiff manager Frank O'Farrell described as "most unsatisfactory," Luton showed their character by getting quickly into their stride.

They could have won by a far greater margin. They were way ahead in skill and enthusiasm. The real reason for their win was the midfield superiority of Alan West, Peter Anderson and Jimmy Ryan.

This trio was fast in the tackle and full of ability to make ground quickly in possession. They played their opposition off their feet.

Luton could have been three up by the end of the interrupted first-half. Butlin and Thomson went close with worthy efforts and Aston missed a sitter in front of goal.

But Luton were never going to lose. They had more composure and more ability than the opposition who still have problems — in spite of winning at Orient recently.

It's just a pity that Luton couldn't score a few more goals. They went a bit ragged in the second half, but they

were always the better side.

Horn again performed admirably in goal, and Shanks was outstanding in both rugged defence and swash-buckling overlapping.

Garner again played well and a couple of erratic mistakes made Faulkner's game look worse than it was. He was immensely strong in the air, and always willing to contest the awkward balls with Cardiff's big Andy McCulloch, who was their best forward.

Rip-roaring

Thomson was strong and skilful at right back, and in the first half he did well to block a powerful shot from Phillips which could have changed the course of events.

In attack "Bullet" Butlin gave another rip-roaring performance, thrilling the crowd with his exciting running and brave heading at goal.

And Aston had another grand match, always seeming able to beat two men on the left before curling over his penetrating crosses.

But little went right for new boy Jimmy Husband, who displayed all the willingness in the world without much luck. Somehow he always looks on the verge of a great performance. I am sure it will come once he knows his new mates a bit better. I made West man of the match.

Difficult

John Farrington, Cardiff's recent big signing from Leicester had a disappointing night, and Carling was pulled off in the 73rd minute to give George Smith a run.

In spite of various comments around me, I thought referee Peter Reeves did well in difficult circumstances. He booked Luton's Faulkner and Shanks for dissent at decisions — and Cardiff's Smith, also for disputing a throw-in.

It was an invaluable win for the Town, who are extremely well placed in their ambitions for the First Division. But they could have lost one of the two points in the last seconds, when Horn hurled himself backwards to tip over a Powell header.

Forgetting all the diffi-

culties it was a happy night. A good-humoured roar went up when the lights faded in the 16th minute. Cheers and groans greeted each boost or dip in the power. The 40-minute stoppage did not upset Luton, who relaxed in the dressing room.

Don't forget three clubs are promoted this year.

DIVISION TWO TOP FOUR

	P	W	D	L	F	Apts
Middlesbro'	20	12	7	1	28	12 31
Orient	20	9	8	3	33	20 26
Luton	19	10	5	4	32	24 25
WBA	20	8	7	5	22	20 23

MATCH DETAILS

Luton Town: Horn; Shanks, Thomson; Anderson, Faulkner, Garner; Jim Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Aston. Sub: John Ryan.

Cardiff City: Irwin; Dwyer, Bell; Powell, Murray, Woodruff; Farrington, McCulloch, Reece, Carlin (Smith 73 min), Phillips.

Referee: Mr P. Reeves (Leicester). Attendance: 7,139.

Goal: Jimmy Ryan (47 min).