

GIVE US SOME GOALS

Striking from the deep ...

Clueless attack loses Luton point

3131 5-2-74

By ROGER DUCKWORTH (Luton 1 Notts County 1)

IF LUTON get to the First Division and perform like this they'll not last very long. After grilling Notts County to burning point, Luton's attack went as brittle as overdone toast and was never serious enough to sort out a dogged but inexpensive County side.

Luton threw away their chance of catching Orient on points because their costly forwards were clueless in the penalty box.

The approach work was lovely. And early on Luton tensed their muscles, bared their teeth and threw their chests out.

But it was all a sham. They couldn't put their money where their mouth was. About the best we can say for them is that it was an honest effort. But for Pete's sake, let's have some goals. Come on Luton, you're threatening to be a First Division side. Let's see it.

Add to the disappointment of the result a

crowd of 4,908 and you have a grim afternoon. The gate was the smallest at Luton since their Fourth Division days and Luton secretary Bob Readhead blamed the Football League for it. "We asked for the fixture to be put back to the end of the season," he said.

"But they wouldn't have it. They said we had to play it on a Tuesday afternoon instead of an April evening and that was the result. As far as we are concerned it was like playing a friendly behind closed doors."

The league, apparently, want to avoid fixture congestion at the end of the season. Why, for pity's sake? They're not all going to play on Luton's pitch.

But enough of the moaning. There was also a lot of good about Luton's intentions yesterday. With Rod Fern back in the attack, and a new slimline Jimmy Husband looking the sharpest since he's been at Kenilworth Road, Town look on the edge of something good.

Dependable

Butlin played well too, especially in the first half, but he couldn't half do with a few goals to whet his appetite.

It was finally the dependable Anderson who popped up with a second half goal to save Luton's face. But the lead didn't last long and Probert was allowed to equalise ten minutes from time with a low shot through a congested defence.

Jimmy Ryan also had another good match, in midfield for Luton, and for a second we all thought he was going to have another of those last-gasp penalties to take when Carter appeared to handle his shot in the box.

All he got for it was a booking for arguing with referee John Yates. Luton also thought they should have had a penalty when Husband was tripped with five minutes left.

But they didn't deserve it. They had had enough chances to score without being given a present. And by then, Notts County didn't deserve to lose because of their second half fight back.

Thomson's alert mind was most welcome at times in Luton's defence where Faulkner and Garner did a solid job. But the testy crowd could hardly wait for dependable John Ryan to make a mistake before baying at him as if he was a hated enemy.

Chuckling

Horn looked safe enough in goal, and had little chance of stopping County's goal, although he moved very late. And West did a lot of good things in midfield without them coming to anything.

But I'll bet Orient are chuckling today. If Luton muck about like this they are going to be little threat to the ambitions of the London club.

And Leicester manager Jimmy Bloomfield left with a self-satisfied smile. Luton meet his First Division side in the fifth round of the FA Cup a week on Saturday.

Luton manager Harry Haslam did not appear, so we don't know what he thought about it all. But I'll bet he had a few words to say in the dressing room.

LUTON: Horn; John Ryan, Thomson; Anderson, Faulkner, Garner; Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Fern, West, Butlin. Sub: Price.

NOTTS COUNTY: McManus; Brindley, Cliff (Nixon, 38mins); McVay, Bolton, Mann; Randall, Masson, Bradd, Probert, Carter.

REFEREE — Mr J. Yates (Redditch).



Peter Anderson was back in midfield for Luton yesterday but the club's leading scorer showed he is still a potent goal force. In the top picture he strikes from the deep to score Luton's goal.

Above: Jimmy Husband is scythed down in the Notts County area, but Alan West's vehement penalty appeal is turned down.

Left: Barry Butlin outjumps the defence but his powerful header somehow goes wide.

Pictures: KEITH DOBNEY