

LITT COMES TO HASLAM'S AID

Luton 1 Southampton 1

YOUNG Steve Litt took a big weight off Luton manager Harry Haslam's shoulders on Saturday.

The powerfully built 19-year-old centre-back showed in the Town's opening Texaco Cup match against Southampton that he has both the mental and physical ability to take on the country's top strikers.

And he is almost certain to have to do this at least twice. For John Faulkner, the man he stood in for on Saturday, misses the opening two Division One matches, against Liverpool and West Ham, through suspension.

The Luton boss had intended playing Faulkner against the Saints. But he went down with gastro-enteritis on Friday night and big Steve was promoted from sub.

He faced a daunting task marking men of the calibre of Peter Osgood and Mick Channon. But he took command from the word go and gave Ossie a lean time in the air.

Punished

The youngster was occasionally drawn out of position and this failing could be punished by top First Division strikers. But on the whole Litt had a most impressive game.

I say game, but in fact Litt missed the last half hour of it. He was led from the field to sympathetic applause after being elbowed in the face by Osgood. And he stayed in the dressing room having four stitches put in a cut just above his mouth.

After the match the Luton boss paid him this tribute:

By **LAWRIE MORRISON**

"Stevie did exceptionally well. He dropped in at the back without any bother and did a bloody good job."

Seventeen-year-old Paul Futcher, Luton's close-season signing from Chester, took his place and soon showed why Mr Haslam paid a club record fee for him.

The youngster has class written all over him; cool and strong at the back and always ready to start an attack with a penetrating ball out of defence. He did enough to indicate that he could be pushing for a regular first team place soon.

"Futcher's got a great future ahead of him," said the Luton boss. "There aren't many players who can go on for ten minutes and look good."

Read game

"What I like about him is that he reads the game so well for a youngster. And he likes to attack."

The game itself was a bit of a disappointment.

The Texaco Cup is designed



PAUL FUTCHER

to encourage attacking football — teams are rewarded with a bonus point for scoring three or more goals in a match.

However, neither side really looked like earning the extra point. Both attacks had their moments but defences generally ruled the roost.

Graham Horn made one or two outstanding saves; one in particular denying Channon a goal. The England striker picked up an intended clearance and bore in on Horn. But as he shot for goal the Luton keeper spread himself intelligently and the ball ricocheted to safety.

Horn could hardly be



STEVE LITT

faulted for Southampton's goal in the 55th minute. A marvellous 25-yard shot from Lew Chatterley just beat the keeper's despairing leap.

The goal cancelled out one scored by Barry Butlin five minutes before half-time. From the press box it appeared that Southampton keeper Ian Turner pushed a Hindson corner into his own net as Butlin pressured him in the air.

But afterwards manager Haslam confirmed that it was Butlin's goal. "He got to it first and it went in off the keeper."

The Luton boss said he was pleased with his side's overall performance.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON: Horn; John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Litt (Futcher, 60 mins), Garner, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Hindson.

Scorers: Butlin (Luton) 40 mins; Chatterley (Southampton) 55 mins.

SOUTHAMPTON: Turner (Martin, 45 mins); McCarthy, Peach, Fisher, Bennett, Steele, Stokes, Channon, Osgood, O'Neil, Chatterley.

Referee: Mr Sinclair (Guildford).
Attendance: 8,445.