

'I WON'T RUSH TO SPEND CASH'

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Luton Town 3 Carlisle 1

WHAT's Harry Haslam going to do with the cash? The £120,000 which he collected from the sale of Barry Butlin over the weekend must be burning a hole in his pocket.

One thing I know — he won't be dashing out to blow it all in one go. It's money the club needs to balance the books. But if he sees someone he fancies he has the cash available.

"There's money there when I am ready," he said. "But this doesn't mean I am going in straight away.

"In this game whoever has money is king. At the moment we've got it. I can now go and make my move when I'm ready."

What the sale of the centre-forward at the weekend really means is cash in the bank. Luton are

running at a loss in their first season in the First Division for 14 years.

For a start they need gates of around 22,000 to break even. On Saturday they had 13,000 people watch their first victory over Carlisle.

Purpose

It's obvious that it's going to be a long, hard struggle. But that win on Saturday gave them breathing space and put them above some of the best clubs in the land in the table. At least they're no longer bottom.

Not that it was a wonderful match. Far from it. But it served its purpose. Luton got their first win in ten goes and they can go to Leicester at the weekend with renewed confidence.

Poor Barry Butlin must be shaking his head in perplexity. Look at it this way, Luton go and sell their centre-forward and win for the first time — and score three goals for the first time all season.

It doesn't make sense. Well, not until you do an autopsy on Saturday's game.

Jimmy Husband came back and played at centre-forward. He had a superb match, running with determination, fetching and carrying, setting up attacks from the deep.

And Peter Anderson moved

forward. Instead of clogging away in midfield he played as a striker. His class told and he might have had three goals.

One was enough. When he collected a through ball in the 13th minute and banged it in he looked suitably pleased with his effort, picking the ball out of the goal himself and kicking it on to the railway lines. I wonder if they docked it from his wages?

Disappointing

Laidlaw, that dangerous ex-Middlesbrough forward, equalised with an overhead shot and Luton had to settle for 1-1 at half-time. On the whole it was a disappointing first half and the small crowd couldn't have been very happy at the break.

Luton looked nervous and uncertain in the second half until big Adrian Alston squirmed through to score their second.

He had a smashing game, always willing to try difficult things. With Anderson and Husband helping, Luton looked bright in attack. I hope they stick to this idea. Their defence looks too suspect to play it any other way.

I am not sure that John Ryan is in his best position as sweeper. He makes mistakes that could prove

costly. But going forward he looks as good a player as ever, broad-shouldered, brave and inventive.

Penalty

With Hindson and Jimmy Ryan prompting from midfield, Luton created some cracking moves. Hindson should have had a goal but was too timid to crack the ball on the run. I can understand his feelings, the match was poised in a tense position and any mistake could have been fatal.

Then came the luck that everyone had been looking for. A shot from Jimmy Husband hit the hand of the unfortunate Parker, and referee John Homewood gave Luton a penalty. Jimmy Ryan scored his second goal in two matches from the spot.

At the back Shanks gave his usual competent performance and goalkeeper Barber was alert and courageous on the ground. If only his kicking would improve.

I made Jimmy Husband Luton's man of the match but two others deserve a mention in dispatches. Skipper Bobby Thomson, hurt in the first few minutes, had an ankle wound stitched at half-time — and played on.

And Jim Ryan collected a kick in the abdomen just before half-time and also gamely carried on — in great pain.

It's this sort of devotion to duty that can see Luton out of the mire. It must be realised on the terraces just how much individuals are putting into Luton's struggle for survival.

Afterwards I asked Mr Haslam about the lucky penalty. "He was a very good referee," he said.

LUTON TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, John Ryan, Hindson, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, West, Alston. Sub: Garner.
CARLISLE UNITED: Ross; Carr, Gorman, O'Neill, Green, Parker, Martin, Train, McIlmoyle, Balderstone, Laidlaw. Sub: Barry.

REFEREE: Mr J. Homewood (Sunbury-on-Thames).

GOALS: Anderson (Luton) 13 mins; Laidlaw (Carlisle) 37 mins, Alston (Luton) 54 mins, Jimmy Ryan (Luton) penalty, 76 mins.