

ASTON GRABS LUTON SAVER

Luton 1 Spurs 1
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

LUTON breathed a massive sigh of relief as John Aston smashed in a last-gasp goal to give his team a point.

Earlier, the curly head of Martin Chivers seemed to have put paid to the Town's chances.

But the Hatters deserved this win, for they had attacked so aggressively and Spurs scored against the run of play.

In these unsettled days Luton are having to field unsettled sides.

There was a welcome return to the Luton team for Rod Fern who made his first appearance of the season after doing well in the reserves and scoring a lot of goals. And there was a return for injury-hit Peter Anderson who missed the game at Manchester last week with a knee injury.

But it was sad to see a Luton team without Jimmy Husband who has been playing so well and yet not getting the goals. Jimmy went down with gastroenteritis a couple of days ago. Adrian Alston was also missing. He has been dropped and played in the reserves at White Hart Lane this afternoon.

The first attack of the game was a half-hearted affair with Spurs centre half Mike England pushing forward and sending Neighbour off in chase of a through ball which was too strong and went out of touch.

Luton hit back with a much more direct effort started way back in his own half by Rod Fern and finished off with a searing drive by Bobby Thomson which went just wide with Jennings diving desperately to his right.

Then John Aston took Evans apart on the left wing and got in a shot that Jennings was lucky to stop. It looked as if Luton were in for their biggest crowd of the season and the fans were still pouring in along the touchline long after the kick-off.

Aston was sticking to Evans like glue and he chased back to stop a Spurs attack by slide tackling the ball in for a corner. After his problems this week, Aston looked as if

he was out to show everybody he is still a great player.

A Tottenham attack, started by a good pass by Peters ended when Chivers missed a back header to Knowles's centre, and Garner effectively got the ball back to Barber.

At the other end, where Luton were showing plenty of fight, Anderson got over a good pass to Fern, and it took a diving interception by the Northern Ireland goalkeeper to foil Luton.

The first showing from Duncan almost caught Luton on the wrong foot when he put a first-time pass across the penalty area, but Shanks was too quick for Chivers and got the ball back to Barber without ceremony.

POLICE were rushed to the Oak Road end of the ground when fighting broke out during this afternoon's Luton match.

They moved in to the crowd when trouble flared after chants of "Luton Agro, Luton Agro."

Ambulance crews were also sent in to the crowd and brought out two people on stretchers. They were taken to a casualty clearing station.

Police marched several youths out of the ground.

Fighting broke out again shortly afterwards in the Oak Road enclosure and heaving bodies were hurled out on to the track by policemen who shepherded several fans to safety in other parts of the ground.

Youth continued to be ejected and another possee of policemen walked round the touchline from the Kenilworth Road end to help sort out the problem.

Another stretcher case was hauled away during a lull in the play while Knowles was being treated for an injury.

Luton police said after the match that several youths had been arrested and taken to the police station.

"We may hold a special court this evening," a spokesman said. He added that he did not believe those arrested were carrying any weapons.

In the 13th minute Luton were so unlucky not to go ahead. Anderson headed a good cross from Chambers hard at goal from the far post, but Jennings managed to get a hand to the ball to prevent a goal and Shanks hit the rebound over the top.

On the showing of the first 15 minutes, Luton were the better side.

Garner again was too good for Chivers and headed clear a good centre from Knowles



Rod Fern, back in the first team, goes on the attack

that never really had the Luton defence in too much trouble. Town were always able to break quickly with Anderson and Fern showing well in the middle of the attack.

In the 21st minute a twice-taken free-kick by Perryman ended with the ball going into the Luton net. It was headed in by Duncan, but referee Reeves was on the spot and he noticed Chivers in an offside position to the right of the Luton goal.

A good move between Anderson and Aston was spoiled when Chambers inadvertently handled near the by-line and Tottenham were given the relief of a free-kick to clear.

And a good pass from Chivers sent Peters darting through the middle, but his final pass was too strong and the ball went straight to Barber.

Spurs were being irritating by their use of the offside trap which produced a slow handclap from the Luton crowd when Anderson was caught a couple of yards on the Tottenham side of the halfway line.

Luton were again unlucky when good work by Fern ended with Shanks smashing the ball across the face of the Tottenham goal, but not a Luton player could get a foot to it and West did well to keep the ball in play on the far touchline.

Good defence by Shanks and Hindson sent Luton clear, and a tremendous pass from Fern out to Alston on the left resulted in a cross which Jennings caught under pres-

sure from the fast-moving Fern.

In the 32nd minute Barber didn't know that the linesman's flag was up for offside and he made a terrific save at the feet of Chivers who was all intent on banging the ball into the net. He didn't make it.

Five minutes later a splendid piece of football by Anderson had the Spurs defence baffled and he got the ball across from the left to Fern who, try as he may, could not get a sight of the goal, and in the end his left-footer scraped the outside of the left-hand post.

HT: 0-0

Ralph Coates was a second half substitute for Jimmy Neighbour, and he took a position on the Tottenham right wing.

A good chest trap by Fern foiled any ambitions Chivers might have had, but his clearance, though well intended, was in the wrong quarter of the field for a well positioned Anderson to chase.

A splendid ball by West sent Luton on yet another attack, but Naylor was too quick for Aston and found touch. From the throw, by Hindson, Fern could not quite get high enough to Thomson's probing centre, and another chance was lost.

In the 55th minute, a shot on the turn by Duncan hit the shin of goalkeeper Barber and bounced away.

Meantime, Jennings made two good stops to a low cross from Shanks and a centre by West as Luton continued to press.

Three minutes later Jennings made another flying save to a 20-yard shot by Fern who had been sent through the middle by Chambers.

A free kick by Thomson, following a foul on Aston, was curled across from the left, but Hindson's shot that followed was about 30 yards off target.

After all the pressure in which they had not been able to score, Luton found themselves a goal down after 67 minutes. Coates took the ball out on the right, beat Thomson and crossed. Barber tried to flick the ball clear with a fist, missed and Chivers was on the far post to head into the net.

After Evans had been hurt by a fair tackle from Aston, manager Terry Neill was spoken to by the referee for something he must have said from the touchline.

Knowles had to go off for treatment and Chivers fell back to help out in defence. A long throw by Garner was well headed on by Anderson, but Fern was foiled by England who conceded a corner. Again Tottenham cleared.

Peters went close with a header following a good move between Pratt and Knowles.

A minute later Duncan had the ball in the net again, but was offside.

With three minutes left a miskick by England sent the ball high into the Spurs penalty box. Goalkeeper Jennings was well challenged by Fern and the ball ran clear to Aston who smashed it into the net to save Luton a point.

VERDICT

WITH only three minutes to go, it looked as if it was going to be the same old story. Luton had played acres of good football without being able to put the ball into the net.

They should have been two up at half-time but had to turn round all square after Jennings had foiled Anderson and Hindson.

After 67 minutes, Chivers had headed Spurs into the lead and it all looked lost for Luton. They lost some of their edge but never gave up trying.

And then England made a rare mistake, the ball soared into the air in the penalty box, Jennings was "attacked" by Fern, the ball ran clear to Aston and he smashed it into the net.

It was no more than Luton deserved. All afternoon they were as good as Tottenham, and in the first half, perhaps better.

Rodney Fern made his return and had a good game, spurred on by his amazing band of followers.

And Anderson did well in the Luton attack.

But for my money, Town's Man of the Match was midfielder Gordon Hindson, who seemed to be involved in everything that was good.

A thoroughly good game of football was marred by hooligans at the Oak Road end who spent the afternoon fighting and being either thrown out of the ground by policemen or carried out by ambulance-men.