

FEEBLE LUTON FEEL MANAGER'S HAMMER

Hull City 3, Luton Town 1
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

For Hull don't have a local reputation for picking off intruders so simply. And that's just what they did to Luton.

The Town's midfield outfit, which had

bared its fangs against Sheffield United on Saturday, looked tissue thin as it succumbed to a second-half whitewash last night.

And the attack — which had promised much at the weekend — found its teeth loose and its ideas dulled.

Manager Harry Haslam could scarcely believe it. "Some of them showed more fire playing cards on the bus than they did out there," he said. "Some of them looked lost. This side is not right yet. And I have let them know it."

Well said Harry! But what are you going to do about it? This is a malaise that must be cured before the season germinates.

Three players are due back from the States this weekend. After the Sheffield game I said it would be difficult to drop players to accommodate them.

After last night I retract it. Get Alan West back on the first available jet. Today we don't know which flight it will be but the Luton boss told me: "Depending on their result they could be back on Thursday." West is Stateside with Jimmy Ryan and striker Ron Futcher.

After less than a minute Luton were a goal down. They conceded a corner almost from the kick-off. Ricky Hill failed to clear. Dave Stewart's flag kick and Dave Sunley flashed the ball past Keith Barber from close in.

Made amends

As Luton hearts sank Hill made amends in the fourth minute after Husband had robbed Stuart Croft and laid on the pass for Hill to score with a well-placed shot.

But there it stuck. Luton made some brave faces and in his enthusiasm John Faulkner was booked for slicing down George Lyall. Hill and Lilly Fuccillo looked to be moving well for Luton.

The game became bubbling and pleasant with both sides probing and challenging. A fascinating duel developed between the wiles of John Aston and the speed of full-back Peter Daniel.

Husband twice went close as Luton appeared to have the job under control. But then it was left to goalkeeper Barber to make two good saves from both John Hawley and Stewart. Hawley, an antique dealer, knew his stuff too well for Luton's liking.

While full-backs Paul Price and Steve Buckley were playing quite well, there was occasional casualness in the centre of the Luton defence.

Turning point

But the real turning point came seven minutes after the interval. A penalty was awarded against Faulkner for a tackle on Sunley. I have doubts whether it was either a foul or inside the area.

Faulkner jumped in behind Sunley, arms stretched wide. Sunley didn't jump — and backed into the Luton skipper. As the linesman's flag went up the referee indicated a penalty. Already in the book, Faulkner couldn't argue.

Daniel scored from the kick and Luton looked sunk. They tried in waves of hope to do something about it but when Jeff Hemmerman headed in a Daniel cross in the 58th



Skipper John Faulkner . . . booked then judged to have given away a penalty

minute they were well and truly shipwrecked.

Ricky Hill lost his edge and was replaced in the 64th minute by Timmy Smith — another 17-year-old. The substitute looked lively but could make little personal impression on a game that had already got away from his senior colleagues.

Aston persevered but didn't have the speed to beat the nippy Daniel so that many of his crosses were a result of having made space and cut back rather than from beating the full-back.

Red in the gills

As a result Dixie Deans found little to feed on and Husband couldn't get into the game in a way he wished.

Fuccillo — man of the match on Saturday — looked flat and Chambers never got into the swing of things.

Last season Luton did the double against Hull. Last night they left the field a bit red in the gills. On Saturday they go to Burnley and the Lancashire side will be taking no prisoners. Vast improvements will have to be made all round.

Right now they are dead average: played two, won one, lost one, scored three, conceded three. Average means nothing in this game.

MATCH DETAILS

HULL CITY: Wealands, Daniel, De Vries, Haigh, Hawley, Croft, Gibson, Lyall, Sunley, Hemmerman, Stewart. Sub: McIntosh.

LUTON TOWN: Barber, Price, Buckley, Chambers, Faulkner, Futcher, Husband, Hill, (Smith, 64 minutes), Deans, Fuccillo, Aston.

Referee: Mr M. Lowe (Sheffield).

Attendance: 5,499.

Goals: Sunley (Hull) 1 minute; Hill (Luton) 4 minutes; Daniel (Hull) penalty 52 minutes; Hemmerman (Hull) 58 minutes.