

WEST STRIKES

Skipper breaks deadlock at second attempt

76/77

THE MAIN news from the Luton dressing room this afternoon was that John Faulkner returned at centre-half for the Town. After missing two matches with a knee injury, he came back in place of stand-in Graham Jones who played at Millwall and at home to Cardiff, last week.

Jimmy Husband was again the Luton substitute while John Sims did the job for Notts County. Sims had a few weeks on loan at Kenilworth Road in the 1973-74 season.

County were without full-back Ray O'Brien who has a recurrence of a thigh injury and he was replaced at No 3 by the long serving Arthur Mann. And Brian Stubbs also returned to the Nottingham defence for yet another match which was vital for Luton's fight to escape the relegation pieces.

When Luton came here last season they lost 1-0 in a rather bruising game but today their side showed many changes from the one which played on that occasion.

Before the start there was a presentation to County centre-forward Les Bradd of a silver tray to mark his record 114 goals for his club.

It was presented by Tony Hateley the much travelled centre-forward who was a predecessor of Bradd's at Meadow Lane.

West was soon busy in

ROGER DUCKWORTH REPORTS FROM THE COUNTY GROUND

midfield but when he tried to head through a pass for the attack to chase there was nobody there to do so.

County won the first corner off Faulkner and after Price had half-cleared the ball, it was wasted by a long shot that went well wide.

Impeded

After Price had broken up another County attack, West was again the architect of an attempted build up by Luton. But on this occasion his through ball was shunted back



ALAN WEST

to the goalkeeper by Probert.

More work by West and Chambers provided the chance for Deans to centre from the right. He curled his cross away from the keeper but it went out of play for a goal kick and County centre-half Needham, who was hurt in the incident, had to go off for some touchline treatment.

After a good run through the middle by Deans, chasing a pass from Ron Futcher, Fuccillo was impeded inside the box by Mann but from the indirect free kick Chambers had a shot blocked.

Needham's injury was obviously serious and after he had been led to the dressing



BRIAN CHAMBERS

NOTTS COUNTY: McManus, Richards, Mann, Probert, Needham, Stubbs, Carter, Vinter, Bradd, Busby, Scanlon. Sub: Sims.

LUTON TOWN: Barber, Price, Buckley, Chambers, Faulkner, Paul Futcher, Deans, West, Ron Futcher, Fuccillo, Aston. Sub: Husband.

REFEREE: Mr H. Hackney (Barnsley).

room Sims took his place in the eighth minute.

Then goalkeeper McManus was injured after a tackle by Sims as the fur began to fly.

Following a free kick by County, Luton goalkeeper Barber received a head injury after a tough challenge by Stubbs and Luton, under pressure, were glad of the free kick by which to clear.

While they were fighting

sending the ball straight into the safe hands of Barber, Scanlon burst back into the game with a fierce shot from long range that only just missed the right hand post with the Luton keeper diving desperately.

There was still little excitement but after a couple of Luton corners, a crossfield move involving Chambers gave Luton a bit of hope. But in the end Price was beaten in a chase down the right and all Luton got out of it was a throw.

And then after some more pressure by Chambers, Fuccillo and Aston, Faulkner chased through and tried a low shot which gave McManus a bit of trouble.

In the 28th minute some indecision in the Luton penalty box by the central defenders gave County the chance of going ahead. But Vinter, who had a clear look at goal from an unchallenged position, fluffed it, shooting badly wide.

And then Vinter had a shot deflected high over the Luton crossbar after Faulkner had been slow in clearing a challenge from the right.

hard both in defence and attack, balls were going astray from the midfield department with Chambers and West both guilty. This led to an exchange of words between West and striker Deans.

Burst

After a good deal of listless play, feelings ran high among the home supporters after a tough tackle by Faulkner, from behind, on Bradd.

After wasting a corner by

Tackle

We were all wakened up when a cross from Aston was mis-kicked by Stubbs in the home goalmouth but a colleague was on hand to clear before the startled Luton attack could cash in on a rare chance.

A good tackle by Paul Futcher deep in his own half ended with him making a lot of ground before feeding Deans with a pass on the right. He was quick to put the ball inside for West but the Luton skipper could not control it quickly enough and was robbed on contact.

At the other end Scanlon did well, to beat two Luton defenders as he cut in from the left, but Barber was well positioned to take his low shot that never looked like ending in a goal.

In the 36th minute Luton's Fuccillo was booked for dissent. He reared up on referee Harold Hackney after being blown up for a foul on Probert.

From the free-kick, taken by Probert, a fine header by Stubbs looked on its way to the Luton net when Barber dived across to make a good save.

The standard of shooting was poor but when an effort from Vinter aimed at goal, went out for a throw-in on the far side of the field, the crowd had every right to be angry.

But in the 39th minute Luton went ahead. Deans sent Aston away on the right and after reaching the by-line, he turned a clever pass into the goalmouth. WEST had one shot blocked but it rebounded kindly for him and he followed up to bang it into the net.

After a concentrated build up by County, Faulkner was struck a painful blow by a hard shot

After a tortured build up County eventually got in an effort at goal but it was a header from Bradd which struggled to reach Barber. But a minute later Probert was tripped by Ron Futcher just outside the Luton penalty box and from the free-kick, Busby cannoned the ball into West in the Luton wall.

Luton's second goal came just after the hour when ASTON took a short pass from Ron Futcher, stepped between two defenders and banged a left footer past McManus.

Then the Luton keeper was injured after plunging bravely at the feet of Vinter who was pounding into the box from a right wing position. Barber went down and stayed down and there seemed to be concern among the knot of Luton players who clustered around.

It began to look bad when the referee called for the stretcher and Barber was carried off.

Deans took over in goal with 20 minutes to go and from then on Luton had it all to do to hang on to their two-goal lead.

A mistake by Deans let in Vinter but his shot was cleared off the line by Price.

There was another incredible turn to the game with nine minutes to go. A good shot by Fuccillo was blocked and the ball ran out to substitute HUSBAND who flicked the ball into the net.

There were only five minutes left when Luton increased their lead. Instead of hanging on and guarding their suspect goal, they chose to attack and Steve BUCKLEY made it off with a 30-yard shot.