

TEN OUT OF TEN!

Fifth win on the trot closes the gap on the top teams

By BRIAN SWAIN

DEBUT boy David Geddis scored once and might have had a hat-trick on his first full league appearance on Tuesday night. Some weird refereeing denied him a penalty then gave him a controversial "offside" goal to set the Town up for their fifth successive victory.

The Town should have put a stack past a lumbering, defence-minded Blackburn outfit that had to be rescued last month when ice on the pitch halted the game after 51 minutes.

This time, on a soft yielding surface, there was no hiding place for a Blackburn side which packed three centre-halves into its defence, and was beaten from the moment Geddis popped in a controversial opening goal in the 34th minute.

With Alan West showing signs of getting back to his form of a year ago, and Brian Chambers displaying a lot of craft, the Town controlled most of the game.

And Geddis, on loan from Ipswich and in the side because Jim Husband went down with knee trouble, proved to be a lively handful for Blackburn. Inexperience showed at times, and probably he was trying a little too hard to impress on his first outing.

Ron Futcher, for all his neat flicks and passes in approach, also should have

had more than the one goal he collected in the second half.

Referee Brian Martin, the man Luton loved to hate in early January when he was conned into reprieving Blackburn, saved them again on Tuesday when Derek Fazackerley tackled Geddis from behind after Ron Futcher had measured an accurate through-pass.

Even Fazackerley looked surprised when Mr Martin turned down Town appeals for a penalty.

Paul Bradshaw made saves from Lil Fuccillo and Chambers, and caught a pile-driver from Paul Price before Mr Martin's next mistake compensated for the penalty decision.

Chambers hit a pass towards the right corner-flag. The linesman immediately signalled that John Aston, who raced across the field to reach it, was offside.

In the meantime the ball had taken a deflection off a defender. Blackburn stood and waited for the whistle while Aston crossed accurately and Geddis went flying in to score with a diving header.

"Aston was offside," said Rovers manager Jim Smith later. "But that's no excuse for our performance. We shouldn't have stood still, and I don't quarrel with the eventual result."

Ron Futcher made it safe in the 65th minute with a shot deflected wide of Bradshaw by Wood, who had done the same thing for Paul Price last month.

Blackburn made a couple of token attacks, and although John Faulkner did not always look entirely in command, Milija Aleksic made good saves from Bobby Svarc and John Waddington.

Bradshaw was by far the busier goalkeeper, although West's shooting gave him time to watch the ball sail high or wide three times.

Ron Futcher nearly got a second goal when a mistake by Fazackerley let him through down the middle: he rounded Bradshaw, but by the time he had taken aim for the goal that had been unguarded Glen Keeley had got back to block the shot.



● GET IN THERE: David Geddis, partly hidden as he leaps over a defender, heads his debut goal, with Ron Futcher in close attendance.

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 2, BLACKBURN 0

Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Futcher; Chambers, Fuccillo, West; Geddis, Ron Futcher, Aston. Sub: Hill, not needed.

BLACKBURN ROVERS: Bradshaw; Hird, Wood, Fazackerley, Keeley; Metcalf, Byrom (Mitchell, 45 mins), Parkes, Waddington; Taylor, Svarc.

THE GOALS: David Geddis, in his first full league game, 34 minutes, diving header from a cross by John Aston while Blackburn waited for an offside whistle; Ron Futcher, 65 minutes, shot deflected in by Blackburn full-back Mick Wood, who did the same thing last month off Paul Price.

REFEREE: Brian Martin, Nottingham: Still a clown, but this time the luck went the Town's way.

ATTENDANCE: 9,044 — hardly deserves a team that can take ten points out of ten.

ENTERTAINMENT: Bright and breezy some of the time, and never helped by Blackburn's heavy dependence on defence.