

LUTON DEFENCE PAY PRICE

By **TREVOR WILLIAMSON**

Luton Town 1 Stoke City 2

Harry Haslam, the Luton manager, put the root cause of this defeat down to moments of indiscipline in defence during the opening half. And few of the chilled fans at Kenilworth Road would dispute the diagnosis.

Certainly when Busby crossed after 37 minutes for the second goal by Crooks — his first away from the Victoria Ground — he was not marked and earlier nobody picked up Kendall when he took Gregory's pass and thumped the ball home.

Crooks also headed the ball into the net shortly after Kendall's goal (26 minutes) but this was disallowed for an infringement not apparent from the Press box. Again there was scant cover in depth.

Kendall needed an injection to allow him to play and manager George Eastham's plan to call him off in the second half was hit when Bowers suffered double vision following a collision.

Barnstorming attack

But full marks to Luton for their second-half effort. True they scored only once, through the powerful Buckley, who surged through onto a pass from Hill and thundered the ball into the net. He also let fly from 25 yards after riding a couple of tackles but was just off target.

Luton attacked with 10 men during their barnstorming battering of the Stoke defence, but the experience of the back four, with some 30 years' League experience between them, confined the home side to one goal and one point from the last five games.

Paul Futch, injured in a car crash three weeks ago, saw the game from the stand but was sorely missed on the pitch. Phil Boersma has a date today with the specialist who will decide whether the player needs an operation on his knee or not.

But Luton, who have slipped out of the promotion pack, badly need to pick up points quickly.

Luton Town.—Aleksic; Price, Buckley, West, Faulkner, McNichol, Husband, Hill, R. Futch, Fuccillo, Heale (sub Stein 63).

Stoke City.—Jones; Marsh, Lindsay, Kendall, Smith, Dodd, Waddington, Bowers, (Richardson 61) Gregory, Busby, Crooks.