

TOO EASY FOR SPURS

PROMOTION-CHASING Spurs drove home a cruel soccer lesson at Kenilworth Road on Wednesday night when their irresistible style swept the Town aside with embarrassing ease.

The Londoners were merciless as they exposed the difference between a very good Second Division side and a workaday team of honest triers. The Town were not particularly bad—but compared with Spurs they were novices.

On the night the Town's enthusiasm and hard work were second best as Spurs cruised two points clear of Bolton at the top of the table.

The game reflected the different attitudes to football of the two clubs. Luton Town, the club that has regularly sold its brightest stars, was outclassed by a Spurs combination which is still not strong enough for the liking of the Tottenham directors.

Having tried to spend £500,000 on Gordon McQueen from Leeds, they are now chasing Birmingham's Joe Gallagher — to replace Don McAllister who was more than good enough to keep Ron Fletcher quiet for 90 minutes.

McAllister even had time and space to move upfield and score the third Spurs goal. More important, they had the classiest players on the field in Glenn Hoddle in the middle and Steve Perryman in defence.

The Town tried to neutralise the Spurs midfield power by playing a 4-4-2 formation, with Alan West, Lil Fuccillo, Ricky Hill and Graham Jones up against the Spurs trio of

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN

Hoddle, John Pratt and Neil McNab.

It worked for half-an-hour, with the teams looking evenly matched in an entertaining opening. In fact Fuccillo almost put the Town ahead at the end of quick break, but Barry Daines pulled off a smart save.

Colin Lee had missed an even better chance just before that from an opening created by Hoddle, but the first goal gave Spurs the extra touch of confidence they needed.

Hoddle scored it in the 31st minute after the Town had failed to clear a corner by Pratt.

The Town might have equalised when Hill met a cross by West with a flying header, but it shaved the wrong side of a post, and early in the second half Spurs began to look uncomfortable for ten minutes or so as the Town took the game to them.

Fuccillo blasted a half-chance wide when a cross might have been more effective, and Jones produced a delightful turn and chip shot which beat

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 1, TOTTENHAM 4

Half-time: 0-1

77/78

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Carr, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher; Hill, Fuccillo, West, Jones (Stein, 65 minutes), Ron Fletcher, Boersma.

SPURS: Daines; Naylor, Holmes, McAllister (Moore, 74 minutes), Perryman; Hoddle, Pratt, McNab, Duncan, Lee, Taylor.

THE GOALS: Glenn Hoddle for Spurs in 31st and 58th minutes; Don McAllister for Spurs, 74 minutes; Alan West for the Town, 79 minutes; John Duncan for Spurs, 85 minutes.

REFEREE: Alan Gunn, Burgess Hill—more popular with Town supporters than with those from London.

ENTERTAINMENT: Both sides contributed, but Spurs were a class ahead of the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 17,024. Highest since Rodney Marsh and George Best came with Fulham in September 1976.

STATISTICS: Spurs' 12th consecutive league game without defeat; their best away win of the season; the Town's worst home defeat of the season; David Pleat's fourth game as Town manager, and he is still awaiting his first victory.

Daines but dipped too late to creep under the bar.

It took Spurs 13 minutes to mount their first attack of the second half, but it was a devastating reply when it did come. They won a free-kick a couple of yards outside the area, and Hoddle made scoring looking childishly easy as he bent his free-kick around the Town's wall into an expanse of empty netting that looked big enough to kit out a fair-sized trawler.

With 25 minutes remaining, Jones was taken off, a decision that baffled me and several thousand others, and the Town changed to a 4-3-3 pattern, with Brian Stein reinforcing Ron Fletcher and Phil Boersma in the attack.

It made no difference to the confident progress of

Spurs, and in the 74th minute McAllister moved up to head in the third goal, from a corner by Pratt.

He was injured in the process, and went off to be replaced by striker Ian Moores. His first major contribution was a weak headed clearance from which West scored the goal of the match — a delicate chip from 20 or 25 yards which caught Daines a yard too far forward from his line.

Once again, for a few minutes, hope stirred in the Town ranks, only to be snuffed out in the 85th minute when John Duncan expertly volleyed home the fourth Spurs goal from Pratt's accurate deep cross.

By that time, the Town had given up serious defensive duties in the slim hopes of producing a reversal of form. But desperation never really deserved to overcome quality football.

The consolation for the Town was that the game produced their biggest gate for 17 months, and for the crowd it was a night of football to appreciate, however unwelcome the result for home fans.



● John Faulkner outjumps Colin Lee with a determined challenge—but determination wasn't enough to save Luton.