

NO PRESSURE — BUT LUTON CRASH AGAIN

77/78

LUTON had a brief flirtation with Division One style soccer last night. Their glimpse of life at the top was provided by Spurs who won 4-1 at Kenilworth Road to put one foot back in the First Division.

Spurs opened a two-point gap in the table and took their unbeaten run to 12 games. But Luton's recent statistics make sad reading.

Since David Pleat took over four games ago, his team have failed to win, scored just once and conceded 11 goals.

Pleat insists there is no pressure on the team but he must be worried by Luton's dismal run of results.

Games against two teams chasing promotion — Blackburn and Spurs — and a Cup tie against Millwall may not be the ideal start for any new manager.

But last night's match proved that Luton have a long way to go before they can compete with any of the top teams.

While Pleat struggles through his transition period, some of the fans are asking when he will strengthen the team.

It is no disgrace to lose to a team like Spurs. But what will concern Pleat is the way Luton conceded two goals last night.

Luton 1 Spurs 4

LUTON: Aleksic; Price, Carr, Hill, Faulkner, Futch (P), Fuccillo, West, Futch (R), Jones (Stein), Boersma.

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

REFEREE: Mr A. Gunn (Sussex).

ATTENDANCE: 17,024.

GOALS: West (Luton) 78 minutes, Hoddle (Tottenham) 31 and 59, McAllister 74, Duncan 86.

BOOKING: Holmes (foul on Hill).

Report by ERIC HARRIS



Luton skipper Alan West chips the ball over the Spurs defence for the Town's consolation goal

Dipped

Luton's defence against the Spurs set pieces was poor and Pleat will have to teach his defenders a lesson in self discipline before the visit to Notts County on Saturday.

Boersma, who had one of his better games, could have given Town an early lead with a drive which left Daines groping as it dipped over the bar. But Spurs hit back with a shot from Lee which went just as close.

Luton played only two recognised strikers, Boersma and Ron Futch, and they relied on Ricky Hill and Lilly Fuccillo to add weight to the attack.

It worked well early on as Hill's shot was blocked, and Fuccillo's drive was stopped by Daines. But it was Spurs who showed most of the attacking initiative.

Pratt's effort was deflected for a corner, and McAllister's

low drive was well saved by Aleksic but Tottenham went in front after 31 minutes.

The goal came from a corner taken on the left by Pratt. He found Taylor whose shot was cleared off the line by Fuccillo, but ran loose to Hoddle — Tottenham's man-of-the-match — who hammered the ball past Aleksic.

The start of the second half produced a Luton revival and they could have equalised when Boersma pushed over a probing cross, wasted because none of his colleagues had positioned themselves correctly, and Jones headed wide.

Fuccillo did well to beat two defenders but shot wide instead of crossing the ball into the middle.

Boersma fed Fuccillo with a fine pass but the midfield player chipped the ball over the Tottenham defence and hit the top netting. Then Ron Futch's deceptive cross was palmed over by Daines.

Luton should have grabbed a confidence-boosting equaliser. But the chances were lost

and, when Spurs added their second in the 59th minute, it killed their hopes of getting back into the game.

Spurs won a free kick outside the box and Hoddle rapped the ball to the left of the wall and past Aleksic who was hopelessly out of position.

That second goal de-

moralised Luton and McAllister added a third when he headed in Pratt's corner. McAllister had to go off after being injured in a collision with Faulkner who attempted to cut out the danger.

Luton had no chance of coming back but they kept pressing forward, and West scored a fine goal by chipping the ball over Daines's head in the 78th minute.

Luton mounted a brief rally, and Fuccillo could have knocked in a second with an effort which the keeper blocked with his legs.

But four minutes from the end Duncan rubbed in Spurs' superiority when he converted Pratt's cross from the left. The shot carried too

much power for Aleksic who only managed to get his fingers to the ball.

The game attracted 17,024 fans — their biggest attendance of the season. But it served only to make the Tottenham players feel at home because the Spurs fans made more noise than the Luton supporters.

After the game Pleat said: "There was no doubt Spurs were the better team, but I was unhappy with the displays given by some of my players."

So easy for red-hot Spurs

DIVISION II TOP NINE

Tottenham	29	15	11	3	61	29	41
Bolton	27	17	5	5	47	26	39
Southampton	28	15	7	6	45	30	37
Brighton	28	13	9	6	42	28	35
Blackburn	27	13	8	6	39	34	34
Oldham	28	11	10	7	37	33	32
Blackpool	28	11	7	10	44	37	29
Crystal Palace	27	10	9	8	38	33	29
LUTON	29	10	8	11	39	34	28