

LUTON'S

CHANCES

FADE

80/81

By **BILL MEREDITH**

Luton ... 1, Oldham ... 2

LUTON threw away a golden opportunity to cement their promotion hopes; Oldham strengthened the slender thread that holds them in the Second Division.

On the day there was no denying Oldham's right to both points, but it was a pity their victory was concluded in so much controversy.

Wylde had already put them ahead, with a "free" header from Sinclair's cross after 10 minutes, when one stupid, hot-headed action ruined the match.

If Wylde had been the Oldham goal hero, he was also the culprit in an incident which left Stephens, the Luton full-back, flat out on the grass. But it hardly helped the situation when the electric scoreboard flashed: "Send him off." "I was disappointed to see that," said Jimmy Frizell, Oldham's manager.

After that, Luton lost their heads—and the crowd became more and more frustrated as their favourites slithered unconvincingly into doubtful tackles on a rain-soaked pitch.

Cultured Antic

For a spell after half-time Luton seemed to have regained their composure. Antic, their cultured Yugoslav, made a fine equaliser for Stein in the 56th minute—but the improvement was short-lived.

Wylde, who had been a thorn in Luton's side all through, met a centre from Steel on the right and, though his shot took a deflection, it still finished up in the back of the net.

Then came the pitch invasion, but in the end the game was completed and justice done. With Futch a giant in defence against his old team and Palmer a constant threat, Oldham were just too good for Luton.

Luton Town. — Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Grealish, Saxby, Price, Hill, Stein, Ingram, Antic (West, 79), Moss.
Oldham Athletic. — McDonnell; Sinclair, Blair, Keegan, Clements, Futch, Wylde, Heaton, Steel, Palmer, Atkinson.

LUTON FANS RIOT

80/81

by WILLIAM PIERCE

Luton 1 Oldham 2

LUNATIC Luton fans tried to rescue their side's dented promotion hopes with a pitch invasion, clearly designed to force an abandonment of the game two minutes from time at Kenilworth Road.

But Sussex referee Alan Gunn, who was hit on the head by a missile after sending off Charlton's Derek Hales at Fulham last week, took the players away to the safety of the dressing rooms for 10 minutes while police and stewards battled to control a mob of 250.

Formality

Then he brought them back to complete the formality of the last two minutes for a surprise result that almost certainly ended Oldham's relegation fears.

Luton coach David Coates, said: "There was no excuse for what happened. It was crazy and probably the result of drink. We may now have to consider the possibility of putting up fences."

The F.A. will almost certainly hold an inquiry into the riot when they receive the referee's report. And Luton, too, will be holding an investigation of their own on what went wrong on a day when their tactics of playing a sweeper behind the back four came badly unstuck.

Brian Stein gave Luton hope by equalising after Rodger Wylde had put Oldham ahead. But Wylde drove in a fierce shot which brushed off Palmer on its way to the net for Oldham's winner.