Rivals narrow gap in battle for survival

UTON TOWN'S rivals all picked up points this reek, and the defeat at Portman Road dropped he Hatters one place in the table, to 18th, their owest for two months.

Brighton lost at home o Stoke on Saturday, ut got their first away vin for a year on Tueslay night, to move off he bottom.

Jimmy Case got the vinner to leave John oshak's side deeper in rouble, and Luton only wo points above the releation places.

Saturday's games saw underland win at home to Manchester City and all the ther strugglers, except the own and Brighton, collect

For Birmingham it was a ase of two home points trapped, 1-1 against Not-ingham Forest. Norwich rew 0-0 at Spurs and wansea collected their first oint in three games with 2-2 result at Everton.

PULLING AWAY

Notts County moved even points ahead of the own with a 5-1 thrashing f Coventry, although the own have two games in and of County.

That result produced an ddity at the other end of the league table: Aston illa lost 1-2 at Warford, ut moved up one place, to fth, ahead of Coventry on oal difference,

Watford have lost only nce in seven league games ince their defeat at Kenil. orth Road and are now econd in the table, 14 oints behind Liverpool.

Places in the lower part

the First Division:

Saturday's fixtures involving tubs in the relegation fight; ston Villa v Norwich; Ipswich v irmingham; Luton v West Brom; buthampton v Swansea; Sunderand v Everton; West Ham v

EASY POINTS ARE GIFT TO IPSWICH

ONE figure from the match statistics sums up a dismal Luton Town performance at Ipswich: in 90 minutes they managed only two on-target attempts at goal, and one of those was a harmless looping

A poor all-round performance was highlighted by a

defence that looked Third Division, and the Hatters were lucky to escape a heavier beating.

I don't suggest the manager has to panic, but for Saturday's match with West Brom there have to be changes—in determination and application as well as in personnel. Ipswich didn't so much win - silly mistakes threw

goals away to make the points a gift.

HISTORIC

LUTON TOWN 2, LEICESTER CITY 0

THE tonic the club and supporters needed was given by the Town's youngsters at Kenilworth Road on Monday. They won a cracking match to go into the FA Youth Cup semi-finals for the first time in the club's history.

It was a victory for skill and enthusiasm over organisation and physical power in a contest which held the attention to the last minute. Both sides hit the woodwork, both had spells of ascendancy, and both were ready to go in bravely when they had to.

Leicester looked stronger and bigger, but the enthusiastic local crowd had more to cheer as the Town's youngsters showed flashes of the quick-passing style that John Moore and Trevor Hartley believe in as passionately as David Pleat does.

The telling difference between the sides was in the two penalty areas. Stacey North and Mitchell Thomas were remorseless in their tackling and clearing, with North superb in the air.

Leicester goalkeeper Andrews looked nervy, and induced a lack of confidence among his own back four, and with Ray Daniel prompting from midfield and getting forward into good positions the Town looked sharper attackers.

GLORIOUS OPENER

They had more shots at goal and Gary Parker, who had a marvellous game all round until everyone tired in the later stages, produced a glorious opening goal. His shot from just outside the box in the inside-right position in the 16th minute curved wickedly away from the 'keeper low into the net.

Raking moves threatened to end it all by half-time, but Leicester held out, only to be finished two minutes after the break when Daniel instigated a move from midfield to send Richard Cadette down the left-wing. His cross was blocked, but he got the ball across at the second attempt and Daniel placed a decisive shot into

LUTON TOWN: M. North, Breacker, Petts, Thomas, S. North, Shearer, Parker, Cadette (M. Stein 82 mins), McConville, Daniel, Watts.

LEICESTER CITY: Andrews, Burnside, Brown, Kelly, Hodgson, Rennie, John, Sherwood, Jones (Ford, 72 mins), Cliff, Banton.

BOOKED: Mitchell Thomas for a foul.

OTHER QUARTER-FINAL TIES: Sheffield Wed v Chelsea (tonight), Everton v Barnsley (Saturday), Manchester United v Norwich (Monday).

It was painful to watch It was painful to watch Ipswich, fighting for pride and a place in Europe after their FA Cup defeat at Norwich, pull the Town to pieces down the Hat-ters' left flank.

Until half-time, although one down, the Town looked as though they might force their way back into the game, but once the second goal had gone in they looked certain losers tain losers.

Manager David Pleat made two changes, one of them enforced. Brian Stein, injured in training two days before the game, was re-placed by Steve White, on loan from Charlton.

The irony of making his First Division debut for the club that discarded him last summer was not lost on the centre-forward, but he promised and gave 100 per cent effort.

UNLUCKY

He looked the Town's most likely attacker, and was unlucky not to collect a first-half equaliser with a darting turn which left Terry Butcher stranded. But from a difficult angle White's drive rose a few inches too high.

It was 50 minutes before the Town's first on target shot arrived, with White's pace taking him through on a pass by David Moss, and hitting an angled shot which Paul Cooper saved with his knees. Otherwise Cooper had an easy after-noon, fielding a few opti-mistic crosses and a late header by Clive Goodyear from a corner.

BOMBARDED

At the other end Jake Findlay's goal suffered a heavy bombardment. Apart from the three goals, Ipswich hit the post once, and had a header cleared off the line.

And four or five times

Ipswich made other clear chances. Findlay pulled off the save of the match to

The other ruthless aspect of the game was the way Ipswich realised how open the Town's left-flank was. All three goals came from moves built up down Ipswich's right.

COVERED: Steve White, with Paul Walsh in support, back in a Luton

Town shirt for his First Division debut after being signed on loan from

Charlton to replace the injured Brian Stein. The Ipswich defence, much less

generous than the Town's, ensured he had a blank day.

dozen shots whistle wide.

Manager David Pleat
dropped Richard Money,
gave the left-back job to
Wayne Turner and brought The first came after only back Lil Fuccillo on the left two minutes and 34 seconds. One right-wing attack had already been beaten out at the expense of a corner, but the second The formation was a flop. Turner seemed to forget where he should be at times, Fuccillo made hardly any impact, and Moss was rarely in the game.

was devastating.
Tommy Parkin, on the left side of Ipswich's mid-field, delivered a long, high ball to the other flank. Turner was nowhere near it as Kevin O'Callaghan collected the pass and strode down the right wing. Brian Horton went over to try to cover, O'Callaghan's low cross left him stranded, and Bazil side-footed an easy close-range goal.

The same flank was carved open when Mariner got in a header from a cross by John Wark, with Mal Donaghy clearing from in front of the post. By half-time Hill's de-

termination, and hard chasing by White and Paul Walsh, looked capable of making a game of it, but Ipswich opened the second half at blistering pace.

Their first attack saw Brazil go through the middle in pursuit of a long clearance and shoot against the post as Findlay nar-rowed the angle as best he could. Their second brought another goal. Turner lost possession to Mariner, he sent Putney free down the right-wing, and from his cross Wark headed home from six or seven yards.

Hill's departure shortly after that finished the Town. Billy Kellock tried hard enough, but no one on the Town's books can com pare with a fit and on-song Hill.

White's shot at Cooper's knees raised hopes briefly that the Town could snap out of their lethargy, but in their first game for three weeks they rarely looked like being sharp enough to upset a side that had been given a two-goal start.

TANGLE

The third goal made no difference to the run of the game, but was the result of another mistake. Clive Goodyear and Fuccillo got into a tangle in midfield, Brazil collected the ball, exchanged passes with Put-ney and then joined in the applause as Putney pro-duced brilliant finishing lobbing the ball over Findlay, who had been left without any sort of cover. That was in the 56th

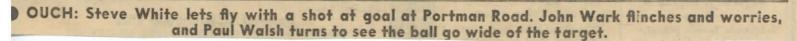
minute and the loyal supporters from Luton knew that it was going to be a miserable journey home. The only thing left for them to applaud was good goalkeeping by Findlay. If only Cooper had been forced into similar action we might all have felt a little happier.



turn away a cracker from Mariner, made three other

good saves, and saw half

side of midfield.



atch De

IPSWICH TOWN 3 LUTON TO Half-time: 1-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Turner; Hill (Kellock, 48 mins), Horton, Fuccillo; Walsh, White, Moss.

IPSWICH: Cooper; Parkin, Osman, Butcher, Gernon; O'Callaghan, Putney, McCall, Wark; Mariner, Brazil. Sub: D'Avray, not needed.

THE GOALS: Alan Brazil, 2 mins 34 secs; John Wark, 1 min 24seses into the second half; Trevor Putney, 56

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town, two saved and seven wide; Ipswich, five saved, ten wide, one hit a post.

ATTENDANCE: 18,615-higher than five other games in the First Division.

REFEREE: Martin Bodenham, Brighton: nothing like firm enough with some of the tackling and would have been in trouble with less disciplined players.

ENTERTAINMENT: Lovely for Ipswich, but agony for the Town followers.