

Thorpe playing on instinct

96/97
LUTON TOWN moved into second place and may have inflicted terminal damage on Burnley's hopes of making the top two with their 2-0 victory at Turf Moor, writes **Nicholas Spencer**.

Tony Thorpe, Luton's 22-year-old forward, proved the difference as he took his season's total to 26 goals.

Thorpe converted from midfield to attack as recently as October, yet his goals, an expert dispatch of a wickedly spinning ball and a neck-twisting header after Mitchell Thomas had flicked on a near-post corner, were all instinct and opportunism.

"I am not very quick but my feet are," he said. "I can draw people in to me and go round them. If I am one-on-one in the box I am confident I can get an effort in on goal."

The Luton manager, Lennie Lawrence, acknowledged Thorpe's priceless ability to turn the game but his side seldom faltered in the face of Burnley's fierce second-half onslaught and their giant goalkeeper, Ian Feuer, was rather less busy than he was entitled to expect.

Adrian Heath, the Burnley manager, remains optimistic. "We have plenty to play for this season," he said, but Burnley seem destined to carry their impressive late-season form into the play-offs.

Burnley: Beresford; Brass, Hoyland (Little 81), Winstanley, Smith; Parkinson, Weller, Thompson (Guinan 59), Matthew; Barnes, Cooke. **Sub:** Swan. **Booked:** Cooke.

Luton Town: Feuer; McGowan (Guenchev 82), Davis, Johnson, Thomas; Alexander, Waddock, McLaren, Kiwomya (Marshall 65); Thorpe, Oldfield. **Sub:** Grant. **Booked:** Johnson, Thomas. **Goals:** Thorpe (14, 39).

Referee: T Jones (Barrow-in-Furness).