

It Was Not The Town's Lucky Day

[By Chiltern]

LUTON TOWN 1

Billington.

BIRMINGHAM CITY 3

Trigg (3).

After three rousing home wins, the Town found their successful career at Kenilworth-road checked by Birmingham, who were rather lucky to go away with both points.

Throughout the match nothing went quite right for Luton, and it is perfectly true to say that they will play worse and yet win matches.

Among their major misfortunes were two shots which hit the woodwork, and three unsuccessful appeals for penalties for handling offences in the second half.

The fact that the referee refused to allow these appeals, and also ignored a linesman who was flagging for offside when Birmingham scored their second goal, incensed most of the 23,010 spectators, who voiced their opinion most audibly.

Birmingham proved a very workmanklike combination with a sound defence as the main foundation of their strength.

When TRIGG gave them the lead following a defensive misunderstanding after 24 minutes, it was against the run of the play, and they had been fortunate not to go into arrears when Waugh crashed the ball against the woodwork.

BILLINGTON SWEEP AWAY GLOOM

After TRIGG fastened on to another through pass to put Birmingham further ahead five minutes before the interval, things began to look black for the Town.

However, some of the gloom was swept away when BILLINGTON, with the last kick before the interval, beat Merrick with a terrific shot from near the edge of the penalty area.

The Town begin the second half in a style that was reminiscent of that which was shown against Newcastle, and it seemed that so much pressure must bring about the downfall of the visitors' goal.

Had the Town been able to score early in the half, I am certain it would have been the forerunner of other goals, but they simply could not get the ball into the net.

Daniel came nearest to doing so when he shot against the post, but, for the most part, fine covering by Birmingham limited the Town's scoring opportunities.

Even so, an equaliser was always a possibility until eight minutes from the end when a rare Birmingham breakaway on the right enabled TRIGG to complete his "hat-trick" with another simple goal.

SMOOTHNESS IN ATTACK WAS LACKING

Luton never really achieved the same smoothness in attack as they have shown on previous occasions. Waugh and Duncan played extremely well, and Billington was a great trier who lacked support, but neither Daniel nor Driver adopted the correct tactics.

They both tended to hold the ball too long when quick, crisp passes were needed, and the result was that the Birmingham defence was seldom drawn out of position.

Cooke and Beach did their team the inestimable service of holding Edwards and Mulraney, and most danger to the Town goal came from through passes which Trigg was quick to accept.

Gager had quite a good match, but he and Bywater must develop a better understanding. The goalkeeper made more than one error in coming out to the ball, and prompt shouting by one or the other seems to be the answer to the problem.

Gardiner played a grand game, and so did Soo until an ankle injury cut down his effectiveness considerably.