

No Luck For Town In Game Of Hard Knocks

By Chiltern

LUTON TOWN	0
WEST BROMWICH ALBION	1

In a match that was fought out at fever heat, and in which robust tackling and a general do-or-die spirit were the outstanding features, it would have been a little difficult for a stranger to have picked out the team in line for promotion.

Certainly the Albion did not look the part, except in their rugged determination not to meet with defeat, and the Town produced quite as much, and perhaps a little more, of what good football there was.

The Albion's tactics paid dividends, but it might well have been otherwise, and on the run of the play the Town were slightly unlucky not to share the points.

Neither attack ever really overcame the dual handicap of the bone-hard ground and the lively ball, plus the relentless tackling, with the result that forwards were not seen in the best of light.

Almost from the start defences held a grip, which was seldom relaxed, and the Albion owed much to the rock-like quality of their rearguard, which threw back the Town forwards time and again when promising movements had enabled them to reach the vicinity of the penalty area.

The only goal was an unsatisfactory sort of affair from the Town viewpoint, but will be regarded as a golden one by the Albion.

SIMPLE GOAL WAS DECIDER

It came after 21 minutes when Hall, out on the wing, failed to prevent Barker getting in his centre. An innocuous enough effort it looked, for Streten seemed certain to make a clean catch.

As I saw it, he took his eyes off the ball for a split second and then dropped the ball when it came to hand. Lying handy was MORROW, young deputy for International Elliott, and he made no mistake about tapping it into the net.

There were times when the Town gave promise of equalising, and there were grand efforts by Kiernan, Gardiner and Burtenshaw. Certainly the Town fought hard and showed a welcome improvement on their recent form, but they could not wipe out their arrears.

Matters were not improved when Streten was carried off 12 minutes after the resumption, and Owen took his place in goal for the rest of the game.

A few minutes later Barker also had to leave the field, and though it lost nothing so far as speed and vigour were concerned, the game seldom looked like producing more goals.

OTHERS WERE INJURED TOO

Streten was not the only Luton player to suffer injury, for Aherne, making his home debut, played under handicap for most of the game, and Watkins was severely shaken by a fall in the first half. Both played on pluckily.

There was not much wrong with the Town defence except that Hall tended to give Walsh time in which to get the ball under control, and then often found himself beaten by the clever footwork of the Irish international.

Gardiner made a successful return to the team, and Owen was playing finely until he was forced to don Streten's sweater. Cooke was in his most indomitable mood and was one who took a leaf out of the Albion's book and went in to meet the ball consistently.

Pick of the forwards was Kiernan, who had a splendid game, especially in the second half when he tried desperately hard to gain the equaliser or to provide the opening for it.

Brennan was mostly held by Vernon, and often seemed to be running into the centre-half with the ball. Neither Burtenshaw nor Waugh really received the best of service, but the former, in particular, made some very useful centres.

Luton Town: Streten; Cooke, Aherne; Gardiner, Hall, Owen; Burtenshaw (C), Kiernan, Brennan, Watkins, Waugh.

West Bromwich Albion: Sanders; Pemberton, Millard; Kennedy, Vernon, Ryan; Morrow, Barlow, Walsh, Haines, Barker.

Referee: R. G. Haines, Swindon.