

# SAFETY POINT WON IN GRIM BATTLE

*By Chiltern*

**LUTON TOWN ..... 1 BIRMINGHAM CITY 1**

The loss of a home point is often the cause of disappointment, but this was not the case at Kenilworth-road on Saturday when 16,324 spectators saw an entertaining game in which the Town did enough to deserve to win.

But what satisfied the fans most was that the point that was gained after a hard-fought, robust battle assured the club of a continuance in the Second Division and, even for that reason alone, this was quite an auspicious occasion.

There were other happenings, though, to make this a match to be remembered, notably the great goal scored by PEMBERTON in the sixth minute with a flashing first-time drive that rose into the top of the net leaving Merrick helpless.

When that happened, visions were conjured up of a victory over the Town's Midland rivals, who had never even dropped a point in the five previous meetings of the clubs in the Second Division.

That that did not occur was due to a mixture of circumstances one of which was that Warhurst demonstrated that Pemberton was not the only outside-left on the field who could produce a powerful scoring shot.

When the ball rebounded to him after Cooke's clearance kick had struck a Birmingham player after 22 minutes, WARHURST promptly cracked it into the net, leaving Streten just as helpless as Merrick had been.

## **FINISHING NOT SO GOOD**

The other circumstances took the form of some finishing that was not up to the high standard of some of the Town's approach work and some solid defensive work by Birmingham in which Merrick's coolness and sense of positional play was a dominating feature.

Yet, the Town should have been ahead at the interval, for they had more of the first half play and were more cohesive and more dangerous in attack than were their opponents.

However, there was no more scoring, and the second half produced a grimly fought battle which lacked the sparkle of the first period, and in which defences took a grip that was seldom relaxed.

Result was that many attacks broke down prematurely, and that shots of a telling character were few, though what there were mostly came from the Town.

The Town showed plenty of fighting spirit and team spirit and they had to against a side that was determined to maintain their chance in the promotion battle.

Not often was the defence in trouble for which they owed a great deal to the effectiveness of Watkins and Shanks, two stout-hearted wing halves, who broke up attack after attack by stern tackling.

Shanks was perhaps the outstanding member of the team, especially as he often had to cover up Lake, who had a very anxious first half against Berry, and there always seemed to be a chink in the Town's defensive armour in this position.

## OWEN WAS SELDOM BEATEN

Cooke was a lot more certain against Warhurst, and Owen was seldom beaten by Trigg, whom he watched closely. The tall centre-half held up his old colleagues time and again, and with the ball bouncing about, his height and good headwork came in extremely useful.

Streten was again well covered, but there were one or two difficult jobs for him, notably when Rowley found himself left with a great chance in the closing stages, but Streten made a courageous save.

The forwards moved the light ball about most accurately, but found it something of a handicap when it came to finishing, with the result that a lot of the shots went too high.

Stobbart and Taylor again worked well together, while Davie did a lot of useful prompting and clever distribution. Plenty of wandering was done by Moore to escape the close attentions of Atkins, and, to a large extent he succeeded, though his finishing was not so powerful as it has been.

Again, Pemberton did reasonably well in what everybody realises is only a temporary position for him and he was direct and did get the ball across consistently.

**LUTON TOWN:** Streten; Cooke, Lake; Watkins, Owen, Shanks; Stobbart, Taylor (J.), Moore, Davie, Pemberton.

**BIRMINGHAM CITY:** Merrick; Green, Badham; Dorman, Atkins, Ferris; Berry, Higgins, Trigg, Rowley, Warhurst.

Referee: R. J. Burgess, Reading.