

# FLUKY GOAL GAVE TOWN BOTH POINTS

## Much Muddled Forward Play In A Dull Match

(By Chiltern)

LUTON TOWN ..... 1 BIRMINGHAM CITY 0

A goal that was in the same muddled, accidental sort of category as much of the football played by two shot-shy forward lines in this tedious meeting of two teams who rate themselves as promotion candidates, gave the Town two points which they barely deserved.

That the result ended in their favour and served to lay further the bogy that Birmingham have presented in the past, together with the fine work of the defence, was about all the consolation that the home fans could draw from this display.

Right from the start, defences were so much on top that it seemed inevitable that the crowd would see few goals for their money, and it began to look as if they would have no excitement of this sort at all as the second half dragged on with no relaxation of their grip which defenders had taken.

Then, with a bare six minutes remaining, Morton lobbed over a high centre that Merrick, perhaps unsighted by Boyd, misjudged, and the ball bounced off ADAM, who was running in, and rolled into the net.

Appeals for hands against the outside-left were waved aside by the referee, and the Town had not much difficulty in holding on to their narrow lead.

Apart from some solo runs, mostly down the left wing by Pye, the Town forwards were a sluggish, incohesive lot, whose passing at times was almost unbelievably inaccurate, and any hopes that the Town would score were based mainly on Pye's ability to free himself of the close attentions of Smith.

### WHEN PYE WAS UNLUCKY

When he did so, he was always dangerous, and he was most unlucky in the first half when a shot from an angle on the left wing struck the crossbar and rebounded to safety.

Almost the only other occasion when Birmingham looked likely to concede a goal during the first half came when Cummins drove the ball first time and Merrick made a great save.

Nor did Birmingham give any more promise of goals, despite some neat midfield work and the speed of Astall on the right wing. In the main, before the interval, the Town were on top, but Birmingham had periods of supremacy in the second half and, during one of them, Kinsey struck a post from Lane's pass with Streten, for once in a way, beaten.

One of the disappointing features of the Town's forward display was the lack of thrust on the wings where neither Mitchell nor Adam seemed to be able to get going.

Occasionally, in the first half, there was evidence of understanding between Cummins and Adam, but it did not amount to much in the end and the right wing was very much out of joint.

The switching of the wingers early in the second half had no noticeable effect and it was not until Adam went back for a second spell at outside-left that he showed anything approaching his true form.

### TURNER WAS TOO DEEP

From Cummins there was a very patchy display and Turner, whether by accident or design, was too often lying deep when his marksmanship ability was needed much nearer goal.

For long spells Pye was playing much of a lone hand and dangerous though he was when in possession of the ball, it was too much to expect him to break down this solid Birmingham defence with the measure of support he received.

Birmingham were strong in defence—there is no denying that—and there was an equally good defensive display from the

Town, in which Owen was an outstanding figure.

Through the whole of the match he scarcely put a foot wrong, and there was never much fear of the visitors finding a gap down the middle. Morton played his part by putting Murphy largely out of the game, while Shanks was adequate enough on the other side.

By cutting down the effectiveness of the wingers, Dunne and Aherne did a good job, with the former slightly ahead of his partner on this occasion, and Streten, though by no means overworked, was in top form and must have impressed the England selector who was present.

LUTON TOWN: Streten; Dunne, Aherne; Morton, Owen, Shanks; Mitchell, Turner, Pye, Cummins, Adam.

BIRMINGHAM CITY: Merrick; Green, Allen; Boyd, Smith, Warhurst; Astall, Kinsey, Lane, Murphy Govan.

Referee: A. E. Ellis, Halifax.

Attendance: 16,347.