

City marksmen were again off the target

By ERIC WOODWARD

Birmingham City 0, Luton Town 0.

IN the opening stages of their game with Birmingham City, at St. Andrew's this afternoon, Luton Town gave no indication that, less than three hours previously, they had crawled out of an overturned, wrecked coach while on their way to the match.

They played dazzling football for the first 20 minutes against a City side very slow to warm up. When Birmingham did get moving, however, they created a number of chances, but once again their finishing did them no credit.

BIRMINGHAM CITY
Merrick
Hall
Boyd Newman Badham Warhurst
Kinsey Brown Murphy Govan
Astell
LUTON TOWN
Adams Cummins MacEwan Turner Cullen
Shanks Owen Morton
Aherne Baynham Dunne
Referee: Mr. J. Powell (Rotherham)

There was a particularly strong Luton contingent in the crowd, which numbered around the 25,000 mark when the teams came out. A group of hardy Luton supporters carrying a black banner with "Up the Hatters" written on it, was subjected to a barrage of orange peel as they walked round the track. Pype Hayes born Ron Baynham received a cheer all to himself when he took up position in Luton's goal—appreciation of his first England cap.

DAZZLING MOVE

Crash or not, in Luton's first attack they clearly showed that they could still play football. A dazzling move by the right-wing triangle sent them clean through and Turner sent in a terrific drive that Merrick appeared to have covered.

City's goalkeeper, however, didn't get his body behind it, and it spun off his chest over for a corner. The kick was cleared.

A little later a poor Warhurst pass went straight to Cullen, who streaked down the right flank only to be neatly stopped by Badham.

These slick moving Luton forwards looked dangerous whenever they crossed into City's half. Another splendid piece of precision football—this time from the left wing—gave Turner once again the opportunity to go through. He was half-stopped by a good Badham tackle but regained possession and hit a left-foot drive low but just outside the post.

City tried several raids down the right that led to nothing, but then Boyd put Murphy through by the centre circle and the inside-left pushed an excellent pass through to Brown. An over-anxious Brown, I suspect, for, remembering his shooting lapses of late, he hesitated just that fraction of a second too long and then squared the ball across goal. There was no City forward there, however, to receive it.

BAYNHAM'S BRILLIANCE

A tremendous snap drive from left-half Shanks caused Merrick some trouble and he only saved at the second attempt. At the other end Baynham gave a true example of his brilliance when a Boyd drive was slightly deflected by a neat Govan header that looked as if it was going into the net all the way. Somehow Baynham flung himself to the left and finger-tipped the ball away.

More thrills followed. City attacked strongly and the ball was forced out near the corner flag. Astall took a long throw which eluded the Luton defenders and

went bouncing towards Govan. The winger tried a wild swing that didn't connect when only eight yards out and Warhurst came in to have a go, but he, too, was far from accurate, the ball being helped on its way over the bar by Morton's back.

Hereabouts it was all City with halves and backs pressing their forwards through with a series of well-timed passes. But Luton's defence remained firm, helped, of course, by too much hasty work from City's forwards when within firing range.

Keeping up the pressure City went down again and Brown neatly wormed his way past Dunne before squaring the ball from the by-line into the middle. His efforts failed, however, for Shanks hurriedly booted the ball away before City's forwards could get to it.

City always seemed to make one pass too many in the penalty area. They did force yet another corner on the right, but Astall's kick was easily cleared. Hall hit the ball back but once again the fair-haired former City player Sid Owen was there to marshal his rearguard and send the ball away to his inside forwards.

BEATEN TO IT

Back once more for Murphy to try and head goalwards from the edge of the box but Baynham beat him to it. City's inside-left, in fact, was penalised by the referee.

City's next thrust followed a shrewd Warhurst flick to Brown. The centre-forward, standing on the left-wing, neatly lobbed the ball into the middle but the tall Baynham reached out to take it off Kinsey's head.

Luton replied with a move started by Cullen, who sent Turner racing down the right flank. He moved inside but once again Badham, who was having an excellent match, tackled him off the ball.

Half-time: Birmingham City 0
Luton Town 0

That man Badham was the first City player to offer anything like a strong line of attack on the resumption, making a fast wing run before pushing the ball forward for Brown. The centre-forward, however, went the wrong side of Owen and the Luton skipper was able to turn and push the ball back to Baynham.

Luton swept into action with a right-wing run that ended with a fierce MacEwan drive that Merrick grabbed at the second attempt.

City's best effort came a couple of minutes after the break when Govan raced on to a loose ball near the edge of the penalty box and scooped it up over Baynham's head but it sailed just over the bar—a near thing!

Luton showed their quicksilver neat touches again when a lovely move enabled the crowd to see the ball quickly switched from Cullen to Cummins and then on to Turner for the inside-right to fire in a sharp drive that Merrick gathered.

At the other end a centre troubled both the Luton defence and the home forwards. Govan helped the ball on its way towards the net, with the remaining players standing mesmerised, but just as it was about to bounce into the net, Baynham flung himself across and gathered it, with the watchful Owen running in to help.

In the next Blues raid, Kinsey popped up near the far post to head it towards the net. Baynham, however, pushed it over the top at the expense of a corner, which was cleared.

Warhurst earned a round of applause for two excellent tackles in succession to prevent the elusive Turner from breaking through.

City's first direct shot for some time came from Astall after Murphy had sent him through. It was accurate enough but lacked power and Baynham had enough time to come across and take the ball cleanly.

DISALLOWED GOAL

With 64 minutes gone, Brown put the ball into the Luton net, but the point was disallowed presumably for offside. Brown made the running himself, tearing in from the left to push the ball to Murphy.

The inside-left's shot hit a Luton defender but bounced back to City's centre-forward and this time he hit the ball past Baynham from close range.

The referee was about to award a goal, when his attention was attracted by the linesman's flag and after a consultation gave Luton a free kick.

HERE THEY COME!



THE GAME MUST GO ON. LUTON, DESPITE THEIR EXPERIENCE, WERE LED OUT ON TO THE FIELD ON TIME AT ST. ANDREW'S. AND WHO BETTER TO LEAD THEM ON THAT SID OWEN, THE FORMER BLUES' PLAYER, WITH RON BAYNHAM, BIRMINGHAM-BORN GOALKEEPER, WHO HAS BEEN SELECTED TO PLAY FOR ENGLAND.



Jack Badham
Recalled to duty