

MAGNIFICENT VICTORY AT BRIGHTON

69/70

BRIGHTON 1, LUTON TOWN 2

IN THE midst of another brilliant away victory, their sixth of the season in the League this season, two players stand out in the midst of what can only be described as a magnificent team effort.

I name Graham French as the match winner, and Sandy Davie as the one who did so much to maintain the Town's position once they took the lead.

French probably has never played more brilliantly for the Town, and certainly Henderson will never forget the "roasting" he received, especially in the first half, and both the Town goals came as the result of the splendid approach work of the winger.

First goal came after 29 minutes through John Collins, whose chance was set up by a header from Matt Tees, and the Town staved off desperate Brighton attempts to draw level by half-time.

Then with a minute of the second half gone came what was really the killer blow when French again pulled the Brighton right flank all over the place and a bad defensive mistake presented Collins with his second goal.

After that though they kept breaking smartly into attack, the Town had to withstand a great deal of heavy pressure in which even the home full-backs joined.

It was during this period and the one immediately before half-time that Davie earned the applause of the crowd of 18,722 for three or four saves which were very nearly out of this world.

In doing so he was badly shaken on at least two occasions, but carried on and this was indeed a brave performance, which marks him out as one of the best goalkeepers in the Division.

When Brighton hit back with a goal with 21 minutes left, the fat seemed to be in the fire, especially as the home team were playing with great determination, and no little skill.

I would put them as one of the best teams the Town have met this season, but they could not produce the finish, and this continued to be true during the closing phase when they threw in just about everything.

At the same time, tremendous credit is due to the Town defence, which had to be re-organised for the third consecutive match, due to an injury to a full-back.

This time it was Freddie Jardine who had to be taken off with a leg injury after 36 minutes, and for once in a way it seemed that manager Alec Stock had guessed wrong in nominating his substitute. Sitting in the stand was John Ryan, the obvious deputy for the position, but Peter Phillips had been named and he went on.

As a result, Malcolm MacDonald dropped back again, and he must be starting to wonder whether he is a striker or defender, because this is the third consecutive time the switch has happened to him.

In moving back he faced a formidable task in trying to match the speed of Brighton's most dangerous forward, Armstrong, which he never quite did.

Allen was again a tremendous worker in midfield, and Collins varied his game so well that he was in position to snap up the goals.

This was quite the best game I have seen this season.