

Unlucky Luton get big boost from Halom

Luton 0 Birmingham 0: by PETER GILL 71/72

LUTON HAVE yet to taste the fruits of victory and it showed in their over-anxiety and general frustration in front of goal. Yet they were within touching distance of two points because they had thoroughly mastered the brave and somewhat unimaginative Birmingham side by midway through the second half.

With some justification they could claim that luck was not on their side, especially when Peter Anderson, seeking to make certain of a goal, interrupted a header from Vic Halom that seemed for the net.

Had £30,000 Halom scored in his first game for Luton he would have been hailed as a hero, but he gave every sign that he can bring the added punch and strength the Luton attack has been lacking.

Without any doubt his name would have been in the scorer's list but for two brilliant saves by Birmingham's reserve goalkeeper Dave Latchford. One was a purely reflex action as Halom met the ball squarely with his head and the other a gallant intervention with his body as the centre-forward bore in to shoot at point-blank range.

If Luton had broken the ice they might well have gone on to the sort of victory that would have removed all their inhibitions.



Despite their stubborn defence, Birmingham were in deep trouble for the last 25 minutes when they had to hang on grimly for a point.

Yet their position could have been very different had Bob Latchford accepted two gilt-edged chances during the first-half when Luton looked decidedly uneasy down the middle of their defence.

With the first opportunity Latchford hit the side netting and was even more blameworthy near half-time when, with the net yawning, he lifted the ball over from five yards.

Had Latchford snapped up those opportunities, Luton might have collapsed like a pack of cards. Instead they went from strength to strength so that Birmingham, for whom George Smith and Alan Campbell had gained midfield control, had to concentrate more on defence.

LUTON.—Read: John Ryan, Shanks, Keen, Nicholl, Moore, Busby, Slough, Halom, Givens, Henderson. Sub: Court.

BIRMINGHAM.—David Latchford; Martin, Pendrey, Smith, Hynd, Robinson, Campbell, Francis, Bob Latchford, Page, Phillips. Sub: Summerill.