

TOWN CLOSING UP ON THE LEADERS

NOTTINGHAM FOREST 0, LUTON TOWN 1

72/73

THE Town continued their march up the Second Division table with this fine win over previously unbeaten Nottingham Forest, who were out-thought and outplayed in almost every department. Luton played with great assurance to turn in a fine team display.

By ERIC NORRIS

The decisive goal in the 27th minute was scored by John Aston, and it was a special one for his mother, Mrs Lilian Aston, who drove down from Manchester to see him in the Town's colours for the first time.

Afterwards, Mrs Aston said: "He didn't say that he would score one for me, but I told him to. It was marvellous. But, after being used to Manchester United, where my husband is chief scout and my younger son is an apprentice, I found it difficult to adjust to the change of colours. I kept concentrating on the team in red," she said.

John Aston is still living at his parents' home in Manchester, and to save making the long journey to Luton and back every day, he does some of his training at Oldham.

Superb

ASTON's goal was taken superbly when he hammered home a good centre by Jimmy Ryan, who had shown some clever footwork in taking the ball to the line and pulling it back to make his cross.

Luton's aggressive spirit caught Forest on the hop, and it was obvious that they are not used to a team going all out at them on their own ground.

In fact, the home defence

was under pressure from the start, when Aston presented Jimmy Ryan with a chance to get in a shot which brought goalkeeper Barron to a full-length save.

There was another early escape for the Forest as Luton's attack buzzed menacingly round their penalty area. Fern sent Busby through with a fine pass, and he managed to round Barron, but lost control in doing so, and ran the ball over the line.

When Forest did move

not manage to cause undue trouble to the Town's solid rearguard. Gemmell, forced to try his shooting luck from long range, was well off target.

The Town regathered themselves and started to drive forward again for Aston to miss a good chance in the 54th minute, when he was put through by the industrious Halom. He delayed getting in his shot, and it was blocked by a thankful Barron.

Aston was the star of the

all worked for each other and fought as a team.

However, there is no doubt that this was the finest game I have seen John Aston play for the club, and not far behind him in performance were Rodney Fern, Vic Halom and Viv Busby, who was a constant thorn in the side of the Forest defence, although once again the goals he is seeking so hard eluded him.

In midfield, Peter Anderson again proved himself to be a human dynamo, tackling successfully and creating openings. It was in this department that the Town had the edge over the Forest, because they were al-

VERDICT: A triumph for team work

forward, they looked nowhere so crisp as the Town and found Barber once again in excellent form. The goalkeeper did well to go down to grasp at a low shot by McIntosh.

The Town forced a series of corners through the industry of Aston, Busby and Halom, and from one of these, Halom was a little unfortunate to see a good header fly just wide.

Luton were looking by far the more dangerous side, much to the discomfort of the home fans, who soon started to vent their feelings against Forest manager Matt Gillies.

Chants of "Gillies — out" were started up, which in the light of things, was being very unfair to the Forest chief, considering that they had not lost a match up to Saturday.

But the fans were silenced temporarily in the 36th minute, when Forest came close to snatching the equaliser. Breaking quickly from defence, Robinson tried a long drive that rebounded off the Luton post.

Off the boil

Once again the Town's tendency to go off the boil for a spell at the start of the second half was evident and even the players cannot give an explanation for this.

Possibly, it is forced on them by opponents who have had the half-time interval to think about what is happening to them, and decide to take the initiative themselves after the break.

In this case, although there was more industry about Forest, they still did

Town attack. Again he fully tested Barron with a low drive, and then the goalkeeper was in violent action again, saving a dangerous free kick by Jimmy Ryan as the Town clicked back into top gear.

Forest gloom

The Forest fans were really disgruntled by this time, as they saw their team slipping to defeat with

LINE-UP

NOTTINGHAM FOREST:
Barron; Hindley, Gemmell;
Serella, Cottam, Fraser; McIntosh, Lyall, McKenzie, Robinson, O'Neill. Sub: Lyons.
LUTON TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Thomson; Anderson, Faulkner, Garner; Jimmy Ryan, Fern, Busby, Halom, Aston. Sub: Slough.
Referee: R. L. Johnson (Lowestoft). Attendance: 9,495.

no sign of an answer to the Town's slickness.

Play was held up in the closing minutes when referee R. L. Johnson, of Lowestoft, had a word with police officers behind the Forest goal about a whistle that had been blown in the crowd.

He also spoke to Forest officials on the bench, and the outcome was a public announcement three minutes from time that if the whistler persisted the game would be abandoned.

This was just the kind of straw that the Forest fans were ready to grasp and predictably, the announcement was greeted by a chorus of whistling all round the ground.

Thinking back on the Town's performance, one is impressed by the way they

ways sharper on the ball, and on countless occasions whipped it away from Forest players' feet while they were still contemplating what to do with it.

At the back, Bobby Thomson again stood out for his class and it was very pleasing to see the ease with which young Don Shanks, a late inclusion in the side for skipper John Ryan, who was ill, fitted into the pattern of things in his first league outing of the season.

"He is not a John Ryan so far as experience is concerned, but I knew he would not let me down," said delighted Town manager Harry Haslam.

Said Harry: "This win was just the tonic we needed to face Birmingham on Wednesday night." And certainly the way the Town are playing there should be a big increase in their attendance, not only for last night's replay, but for the coming home encounters with Brighton on Saturday and Portsmouth next Wednesday.



John Aston scored the Town's vital goal in the 27th minute and generally gave a sparkling display.

Forest were well and truly beaten