

Francis ends deadlock to put Blues in third round

By RANDALL NORTHAM

Birmingham 1, Luton 0

After 287 minutes of this League Cup second round tie, Birmingham went ahead for the first time. And that goal, scored by Trevor Francis, gives them a third round match against Coventry at St. Andrew's on October 3.

Birmingham, however, hardly earned the right to meet their neighbours. Second Division Luton must be reflecting on the injustice of it all.



KENNY BURNS gets above Vic Halom (10) and John Faulkner to head just wide.

Luton were the more imaginative, more entertaining side at Northampton County Ground last night, as they had been at St. Andrew's and Kenilworth Road.

The measure of Birmingham's untidy and often desperate defence shows in the fact that Kenny Burns, Bobby Hope and captain Roger Hynd received cautions from referee Ted Jolly of Manchester.

But, with another period of extra time seeming certain, Malcolm Page ended a Luton attack and broke clear.

His curling pass found Bob Hatton who sent Bob Latchford sprinting down the left. The centre-forward brushed past John Faulkner on the byeline and slid a short diagonal cross to Francis.

The teenager, who has been below par recently—strangers must have wondered why he was nicknamed "super boy"—pushed a left-foot shot wide of Keith Barber to score his second goal of the season.

All Luton

It was only in the latter stages of the first half that Birmingham began to assert themselves. Certainly the first half hour belonged to Luton.

They attacked from the start and from the 45th second, when John Aston shot across the face of the goal, to the 33rd minute, when the same player had a shot saved, the action was mostly at Dave Latchford's end.

John Ryan shot fiercely but just too high after 15 minutes when he was allowed to move forward unchallenged and then Jimmy Ryan also shot narrowly over the bar cutting in from the left wing.

Jimmy Ryan headed over and took another shot — this after 29 minutes — which Dave Latchford dropped on to save.

Three minutes later, Burns was cautioned for the second time in the tie. The first was at Kenilworth Road last week for bringing down Peter Anderson, the player he tripped last night.

After 36 minutes, Francis who was lucky not to be booked for dissent after only four minutes, turned on a throw-in and shot right footed wide of Barber's near post. It was Birmingham's best opportunity so far.

Injured

Even in this period of attack for Birmingham, Luton found time to create a chance for Rodney Fern.

Alan Garner's Long throw—the effort made him pull a muscle and he was replaced by Alan Slough—was headed on by Vic Halom but Fern's header bounced into Dave Latchford's hands.

At the other end, Burns headed over the bar and Hatton had a shot saved by Barber.

Birmingham's assault did not continue into the second half. Dave Latchford slid out to save from Viv Busby when Jimmy Ryan put him clear and Halom also missed a chance after a mistake by Hynd.

Four minutes after half-time came Hope's booking. He disputed Mr. Jolly's judgment when the referee ruled that Hynd had fouled Aston.

Hynd himself was cautioned 21 minutes later after a desperate lunge at Anderson and, although Luton had created few further chances, they were still the better side.

Then came Francis's goal in what was only Birmingham's second significant attack of the second half.

Birmingham: D. Latchford; Carroll, Pendrey, Campbell, Hynd, Page, Burns, Francis, R. Latchford, Hope, Hatton. Sub.: Whitehead.

Luton: Barber; John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Garner, Jimmy Ryan, Fern, Busby, Halom, Aston. Sub.: Slough (for Garner, 40 minutes).