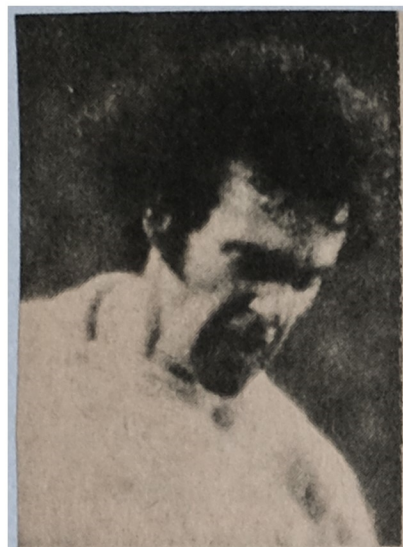




GRAHAM FRENCH
... no penalty but a goal

FRENCH GOAL — BUT LUTON LEFT IN A TANGLE



From ROGER
DUCKWORTH,
Verona,
Thursday

Verona 2 Luton Town 1

DESPITE two penalty appeals late in the game Luton lost to the defensive guile of the Continentals in the Anglo-Italian Tournament in Verona last night.

Afterwards the miserable Luton players moaned: "How can you do anything when they push eight men back?"

The Verona penalty area was like Spaghetti Junction. And Luton did not have the ability to unravel it.

Luton's second cup setback in four days was launched as early as the sixth minute when laxity in defence gave the Italians goal number one.

In their very first attack Verona fed Busatta and he belted a shot past Carrick who, I felt, should have done better with the low effort.

Graham French, first team stranger these days, replied in soccer's universal language with an equaliser from a Jimmy Ryan corner. But the match never lived up to its billing.

Latin press propaganda had built it into a best-seller. But a televised European Cup-tie left it on the secondhand shelf. Less than 2,000 people left their living rooms to see Luton on tour.

Weak

The previous evening the papers had forecast a 12,000 to 18,000 gate.

The gentlemen of Verona it seems are as fastidious as the lads in Luton when it comes to choosing between comfort and live entertainment. Last night they stayed in to watch Juventus play Ujpest on the box.

The vast concrete bowl of a stadium was yawning for more spectators.

Again the Town attack was weak — but with justice. For the Italians were always ready to pack their defence with all hands.

So Hales, in the first half, and Busby in the second had a raw deal. Aston had a fine match for the Town but he could not prise open the strong Italian rearguard.

Jimmy Ryan tried his best and Rod Fern had a good match, particularly in the first half. John Ryan added a lot of strength in midfield.

Skill

But none of it was any good when Jacomuzzi scored early in the second half after Faulkner and Thomson failed to stop a cross-box move.

French had a lot of skill but Verona had the ability to strike straight from defence. Their use of the long through ball was excellent.

This defeat is a setback for Luton. But with two matches still to play they can still win their group and progress.

In defence Goodeve and Faulkner were strong and Shanks and Thomson had the speed to stop their men going round the outside.

And Carrick, who had no chance with the second goal, picked a good chance off the toe of Ciccola just before half-time. Manager Harry Haslam did not send on Horn as he had originally intended.

The claims for a penalty came when first French and then Jimmy Ryan were tripped inside the area. Staffordshire referee Roy Capey would have nothing to do with them.

Yesterday lunchtime the Luton official party was given a reception at Lake Garda while the players put in a serious training session.

Today there was a brief look round Venice before flying home — to prepare for Saturday's home match against Bristol City. They badly need to win that one.

Last night's team:

Carrick; Shanks, Thomson, John Ryan, Faulkner, Goodeve, Jimmy Ryan, Fern, Hales (Busby), French, Aston.

72/73
(AIC)