

THEY'RE UP

West Brom 1 Luton 1
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Brilliant Butlin gets the one that counts

WHAT a cliff hanger . . . but the Hatters held on to that one precious point this afternoon to secure promotion to the First Division.

Brilliant Barry Butlin put Luton ahead after five minutes — but a second-half penalty goal by Tony Brown put West Brom right back in the match.

Then for 17 agonising moments the Hatters battled on — to share the points — and secure promotion.

The hundreds of fans who followed Luton up the motorway in search of promotion gave the Hatters a tumultuous welcome at the Hawthorns as the team ran out. They outnumbered and outshouted the West Brom supporters.

Luton were unchanged but, of course, there had been a terrific upheaval at the Albion on Thursday when top stars Asa Hartford and Len Cantello were put on the transfer list and dropped from today's side for "not trying."

Cantello's place was taken by Hughes, who has had the bad luck this season to have an operation to remove a kidney.

Hartford's place went to Alistair Brown, with Mayo playing at centre-forward instead of Shaw, who was substitute.

The game began with some long balls from both sides. The longest of the lot was a huge clearance by Bobby Thomson, which Butlin chased but could not catch before goalkeeper Latchford collected the ball.

There was also some good early chasing by Husband, but he was unlucky not to get a pass through to his skipper who had run clear on the left.

Luton started with tremendous confidence and John Ryan did well to head back to Horn under pressure. From the clearance came a free-kick which put Luton ahead.

In the 5th minute Faulkner drove the free-kick from the half-way line into the goalmouth and Butlin jumped brilliantly to beat Wile in the air and send his header over Latchford into the goal.

It was just the start Luton needed — a goal taken coolly in an electric atmosphere.

But the Hatters became over anxious and a long ball by Anderson was about 20 yards too strong for the chasing Butlin.

A foul by Faulkner on Mayo on the touchline showed just how closely the Luton centre-half was marking the West Brom centre-forward. From the free-kick Mayo got a header in, but Horn caught it easily.

In the 16th minute a long free-kick by John Ryan very nearly repeated the situation of the first goal. Butlin jumped high, but he was a fraction early and was on his way down as the ball found its way into the waiting arms of Latchford — more than relieved not to let in a second goal.

Whenever West Brom attacked Luton were able to fall back

quickly and both Garner and Thomson made timely stops to shots from the edge of the penalty area.

John Ryan settled himself in for another good performance at right back and Faulkner looked in fine fettle in the middle of the defence, going in bravely when necessary and suing the ball well.

A good tackle by Thomson ended with a pass to Jimmy Ryan, whose through ball was just too hard for West.

But a tackle on Aston just outside the area gave Jim Ryan a free kick. It was booted clear but a West Brom defender was standing too close and Jimmy got another chance.

He slipped the ball sideways to the onrushing Joyn Ryan, took a return pass and put a ball that beat Anderson, Husband and Butlin across the face of the goal. It was a beautifully thought-out move and thoroughly worth a goal. Unfortunately for Luton all it brought was a goal kick to West Brom.

Some of Luton's through balls were too hopeful and one such from John Ryan went deep into the West Brom half with nobody there to chase it. But the important thing was that Luton were



BARRY BUTLIN

intent on going forward and looking for every chink of light in the curtain of the West Brom defence.

In the 26th minute Jimmy Husband cut inside and thrashed a shot over the top. It was well clear, but had it dipped a moment earlier it could have well provided Luton with a second goal.

In the 32nd minute John Ryan was booked for an enthusiastic tackle on Johnston on the touchline. Johnston went flying, but I am surprised he needed so much treatment to get back on his feet.

The next time Johnston got the ball the wave of booing from the Luton contingent showed that they, too, were not sure he had been too badly hurt. Even so, Johnston did well to get the ball across and Tony Brown got in a shot that went wide.

In the 36th minute full-back Thompson was the next West Brom player to appear mortally wounded when he tried to prevent Aston getting across a centre. Aston won a corner, Thompson recovered after treatment and Anderson headed just over the top.

THE MAN WHO DID IT FOR TOWN

Verdict

LUTON Town are in the First Division. That's the best thing I've had to write in seven seasons of covering The Hatters from the Fourth Division to the top.

A goal from Butlin in the fifth minute put Town on top and they stayed there until the 73rd when referee Kevin McNally gave West Brom a penalty after Johnston

MATCH FACTS

WEST BROM: Latchford, Thompson, Wilson, Hughes, Wile, Robertson, Johnston, Tony Brown, Mayo, Alistair Brown, Glover. Sub: Shaw.	LUTON TOWN: Horn, John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Garner, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Aston. Sub: Hindson.
Referee: Mr K. McNally (Ellesmere Port).	Butlin (Luton) 5 mins Brown (W Brom) 73 mins
ATTENDANCE 12,000 (Est)	

Horn went in courageously to take a high free-kick from Wilson under severe pressure. He caught the ball cleanly and hurled it to the halfway line where Husband was not quite able to make contact. At the other end Husband chased a clearance from Garner and he would have scored but for Robertson who hooked the ball off the line.

Unfortunately Garner received a nasty knock in making the pass and even after treatment looked very shaken.

Three minutes before half-time West Brom full-back Wilson was booked for arguing after fouling Aston. Jimmy Ryan's free kick from the right was knocked behind for a goal kick.

Then Faulkner was booked for a foul on Mayo. It was very unfortunate because the game was far from dirty. Just before half-time Thomson did well to block a close-range shot from Hughes and he was there again to help out when a long throw threatened Luton's lead.

HT: West Brom 0 Luton 1

Luton began the second half without John Aston. The knee he injured against Millwall last week went again late in the first half and he was substituted by Gordon Hindson.

A long free kick by Thompson put the Luton defence in trouble — Horn dashed out to fist clear, but two Luton players were injured in a collision. Both trainers went on and Faulkner and Anderson were able to continue after treatment.

The game got a bit untidy and Luton were awarded a free-kick for a foul on Jim Ryan by Hughes. From this the ball was banged into the penalty box and Butlin pushed off it. Luton were awarded a free-kick for obstruction but Hindson's strong shot at the defensive wall bounced clear.

Then, after a throw on West Brom's left, Jim Ryan cut back swiftly to win possession and get the ball back to Horn.

In the 57th minute Butlin went oh so close for Luton with a first-time shot following a pass from Husband on the edge of the box. The Midlands defence did not know where it was and had Butlin's effort been six inches to the left, Luton could have started celebrating.

John Faulkner had to have further treatment, this time for a facial injury, but he was game to carry on. All the football was coming from Luton — but how much they needed a second goal to make their position safe.

After a good deal of scrappy play in midfield, West Brom's Tony Brown got in a long shot but Horn was down quickly on one knee to get safely behind it.

From a Jimmy Ryan corner, a header from Garner was saved on the far post, but the West Brom defence looked far from composed.

In the 72nd minute Johnston dribbled into the box and ran

straight into Faulkner. West Brom were awarded a penalty while Faulkner had treatment for his head injury. Tony Brown scored from the spot.

The West Brom goal really came against the run of play and it took the Town supporters into even greater efforts. The noise was deafening.

