

FRANCIS FLATTENS SAD LUTON

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TREVOR FRANCIS scored his first-ever First Division hat-trick and took his season's tally to 10 goals. But Luton manager Harry Haslam recovered quickly enough to joke with Birmingham boss Freddie Goodwin: "Christmas came early for you this year."

Luton, with only one win in 12 games in the big time, were two down in five minutes—and Birmingham had two more goals disallowed.

"We were bloody awful," said Haslam. "I told them they're not good enough."

There were rumblings from the crowd about Luton's sub-standard performance. But in fairness, injuries to key players Peter Anderson and John Faulkner hindered them.

Young Steve Litt, Faulkner's deputy, had a nightmare match.

Kenny Burns was magnificent in the air and was a bigger threat to Luton than three-goal Francis.

Twice in the first five minutes, Burns headed Joe Gallagher free-kicks across goal for the unmarked Francis to score with style.

Francis nearly clinched his hat-trick soon after Gordon Hindson had pulled one back for Luton with

By DENNIS SIGNY

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his first goal of the season after 11 minutes.

Burns headed on a Francis centre soon after half-time for Bob Hatton to net. But that, too, was ruled out, presumably for off-side.

Francis wrapped it up after 72 minutes when he collected a Jim Calderwood pass, left John Ryan standing and went through.

COMMAND

Birmingham, who had scored a mere two goals in previous away games, were always in command.

Haslam said: "Our lads never lifted their heads even when they pulled back to 1-2."

And to make matters worse, Jimmy Husband joined an injury list that is having a sobering effect on the usually ebullient manager.

Will he reinforce his squad with the £110,000 he received from Nottingham Forest for striker Barry Butlin?

"I'd like to," he said. "We'd all like to strengthen, particularly the London clubs, but the players who are available are the players I don't want."