

Roger Duckworth's VERDICT

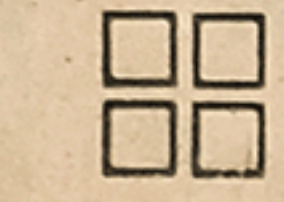


LUTON lost this game with a pathetic performance in the first half when they showed little idea of how to match clever Coventry on a paddyfield of a surface at Kenilworth Road.

By half time they trailed to two well taken goals by Brian Alderson, and Coventry were well worth their lead.

But early in the second half Luton got a grip of themselves and, urged on by a small following, they began to strive forward and played some thrilling football.

In the 56th minute Aston, who was Luton's best forward, chased a good pass from Jim Ryan and fought his way through strongly to score.



Then Luton really piled it on. Aston had another effort stick in the mud in the goalmouth and Ramsbottom made a marvellous save to a fierce shot from Buckley.

But Luton's bolt was shot 11 minutes from time when the tricky Green chased a long ball, beat Faulkner for speed, and dribbled round a tackle outside the box by Horn before scoring.

ALDERSON IS THE TERROR OF THE TOWN

COVENTRY'S Brian Alderson was the Terror of the Town when he scored a double at Kenilworth Road this afternoon.

His two early goals sunk the Hatters' hopes as both teams struggled in the mud after rain had given the Luton pitch a battering.

John Aston pulled one back in the second half after some strong pressure, but Green replied for Coventry after 79 minutes to cook Luton's goose.

Both players and supporters were greeted by one of the most miserable days of the season at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. It was pouring with rain, and the centre of the pitch looked like a lake.

Luton kept the side that lost 2-1 at OPR last week with Adrian Alston continuing at No 8 in place of Jimmy Husband who was substitute.

Luton began sharply with a couple of well intended passes from Jimmy Ryan being rather luckily cut out by Coventry defenders. And then a long centre from the same player was too strong and went out of play on the far side of the pitch as Luton attacked the Kenilworth Road end.

Then Coventry started to push the ball about and a good move down the right was well read by Buckley who conceded a corner.

Luton had trouble clearing this, and from a throw on the stand side Horn had to act quickly to take Hutchison's long effort into the goalmouth.

Then centre forward Fergu-

son got in a smart header to a cross from the right, but again Horn was in the right place at the right time and caught it cleanly.

A free kick by Alderson, which kept low on the clinging mud, was competently stopped by Horn. It was awarded for a foul by Paul Futcher who stopped a dangerous run by Cartwright.

The game was only eight minutes old when Coventry went ahead. Green fought his way through and slipped the ball to his right and this time Alderson made sure when he pulled the ball past a lunging tackle and directed it well past Horn into the corner of the net.

Tremendous cool in defence by Paul Futcher ended with him sending his brother Ron through with a well-directed pass, but he could force no more than a corner and the flag kick, taken by Aston from the right was easily caught by Ramsbottom.

Alderson and Carr combined well on the right and

after Faulkner had half headed clear, Green had a shot deflected for a corner.

Coventry were showing the better form and Horn had to throw himself backwards to tip a clever little shot from Carr over the crossbar.

Coventry's close control had Luton on the run for much of the first 20 minutes and the Town's task looked an uphill one against a polished looking Midlands side.

A good run by Alston came to nothing when there was nobody to do anything with his centre, but as Coventry broke Luton were unlucky that a well-timed tackle by Faulkner on Alderson was judged to have been a foul. They were just starting to tick.

Coventry's second goal came in the 25th minute. John Faulkner slipped in the mud to miss getting in a tackle on Cartwright whose clever run across the box provided the pass for another splendidly taken goal by Alderson.

And after Jimmy Ryan had missed with a tackle back on Hutchison, the Coventry winger strolled through to shoot inches wide of the far post with his left foot.

Two crosses won by the persistence of West from the left might have brought Luton some reward. But the first was cleared and the second skidded out of play off the wet surface.

Green put centre-forward Ferguson through, but as he put the ball into the net the offside flag fluttered.

Then Green lobbed a clever shot inches over the crossbar with Horn covering back as fast as he could.

It looked as if Luton had little chance of saving the game, but they kept trying hard and after Horn had saved a shot from Green, Alston fought his way through only to have his effort blocked after Jimmy Ryan had fought hard to provide him with the ball.

HT: 0-2

At half-time Luton renewed their ideas — as well as their wet shirts — and in the first minute of the second half they very nearly pulled a goal back.

Good football by Aston on the left resulted in Anderson pulling the save of the match

MATCH DETAILS	
LUTON TOWN:	Horn, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Futcher, Jim Ryan, Alston, Ron Futcher, West, Aston. Sub: Husband.
COVENTRY:	Ramsbottom, Oakey, Cattlin, Cartwright, Craven, Dugdale, Carr, Alderson, Ferguson, Green, Hutchison. Sub: Holmes.
REFEREE:	Mr H. Davey (Notts).
ATTENDANCE:	14,423
ALDERSON (Coventry) in	8 minutes
ALDERSON (Coventry) in	25 minutes
ASTON (Luton) in	56 minutes
GREEN, Coventry in	79 minutes.

out of Ramsbottom who managed to put the ball round for a corner.

From this Faulkner had a header blocked and West was unlucky with a shot.

Six minutes after half time Luton should have had a penalty. As Ron Futcher surged into the penalty area, he was blatantly pulled back by his shirt, but the referee, who was in a good position, allowed play to go on and ignored Luton's appeals.

A couple of minutes later the referee continued an inept display by failing to allow Luton advantage when in full control. He stopped the game to give them a free kick from midfield.

Then good work by Anderson saw him pull the ball back from a prostrate goalkeeper, and as he was about to shoot into the empty net Alston charged in and kicked the ball wide.

Despite their bad luck Luton kept on the pressure, and a splendid run by Jimmy Ryan on the right was rounded off by a low cross. Alston, who a minute earlier had been the villain, stepped over the ball and Aston fought his way through to score.

Then Aston fought his way through again and his centre beat goalkeeper Ramsbottom, but stuck in the mud in the goalmouth before it was cleared. The crowd roared Luton to the echo.

After more hard work by West in midfield John Ryan got over a centre, but Ramsbottom managed to stop Alston's flick at goal.

When it was just looking as if Luton might salvage something, a long ball from the Coventry defence was mucked up by the Luton back four, and Green went on a long chase to round goalkeeper Horn and then Buckley before putting the ball coolly into the empty net.



Ronnie Futcher on the attack this afternoon