

IT'S HATS OFF TO CITY

Sky Blue quick view

LUTON: Horne; John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Fitcher, Jim Ryan, Alston, Ron Fitcher, West, Aston. Sub.: Husband.

CITY: Ramsbottom; Oakey, Catlin, Cartwright, Craven, Dugdale, Carr, Alderson, Ferguson, Green, Hutchison. Sub.: Holmes.

Ref.: H. Davey (Nottingham).

CITY comprehensively won a battle in the mud at Kenilworth Road, ploughing their way to victory on a pitch which looked like a paddy field.

Yet, despite the dreadful conditions, there were moments, particularly in the first half, when the quality of the Sky Blues' football touched great heights. By half time, they might have been four goals up instead of the two from Alderson.

And, for a time in the second half, it began to look as though the two goals might not be enough with Luton staging a furious and desperate revival which was finally killed by Green's goal in the 79th minute.

That gave City their third away win of the season, and nobody could question their right to it. Apart from that opening spell in the second half, they took Luton apart, with their three strikers posing problems with which the home team could not cope.

And, with Hutchison and Cartwright effectively using the flanks at every opportunity, City's attack had both pace and width.

The goals

ALDERSON (City) ... 9min.
ALDERSON (City) ... 25min.
ASTON (Luton) 55min.
GREEN (City) 79min.

Defensively, City did not have a lot to do until Luton staged their brief rally during which Ramsbottom pulled off a couple of excellent saves.

So, after last week's defeat by Burnley, it was a welcome win for City and the result may well have spelled the end for Luton as a First Division side.

From the Sky Blues point of view, the two points should ensure that they do not become involved in the relegation struggle and, on today's form, there is no danger.

TV SOCCER

BBC Match of the Day tonight: Arsenal v. West Ham and Birmingham v. Middlesbrough. ITV tomorrow: Ipswich v. Leeds and Carlisle v. Fulham.

LUTON TOWN 1 COVENTRY CITY 3 74/75
BRIAN ALDERSON and Alan Green fired Coventry City to their third away win of the season with great goals despite appalling conditions here this afternoon.

Alderson struck twice in the first half and then Green put paid to a furious Luton revival with a 79th-minute goal.

The only consolation for struggling Luton was a 55th minute goal by John Aston.

Both sides were unchanged despite defeats last Saturday but the biggest surprise was that the match was taking place at all. Heavy rain yesterday and an hour before the kick-off, had turned the pitch into a mud bath with pools of water in the centre circle and penalty areas.

It was still raining when City kicked off and immediately there were signs that the game could become a lottery.

When the players attempted to run through midfield spray

Neville Foulger reports from Kenilworth Rd

flew all around them and players were clearly going to have trouble passing with accuracy.

City, however, aimed their first two attacks down the middle with Ferguson beating Faulkner in the air each time. On the second occasion his flick forward saw Green go racing through only to be given offside.

But City put together a move of quality in the sixth minute which might have brought a goal. Hutchison hit a glorious crossfield pass to Oakey who turned the ball inside to Cartwright. He centred first time and Ferguson got in a good header saved by Horne.

But this led to a spell of



Brian Alderson ... two goals in first 25 minutes.

pressure from the Sky Blues and finally a great opening goal in the ninth minute.

Green set it up, taking a short pass from Hutchison. He made progress down the left, drew two defenders out of position and slipped a pass to ALDERSON who finished off the job with a low shot into the corner of the net from just inside the area.

Luton, desperate for points in their relegation battle, hit

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back but City's football remained much more constructive.

SAVE

Ferguson was giving Luton all sorts of problems and Horne made another good save from a header by the striker. Then City forced two successive corners and, from the second, Ferguson brilliantly headed the ball back to Carr but Horne tipped the shot over his bar.

At this stage, Luton were being outplayed. The Sky Blues were concentrating on using the grassier flanks and the speed of Alderson and Green was stretching Luton's defence all the time.

A neat one-two move between these two strikers almost brought a second goal with Faulkner just getting his foot to the ball as Alderson shot.

It was no surprise when City grabbed another great goal in the 25th minute. ALDERSON scored again, but, this time, a tremendous run from Cartwright made it possible.

From inside his own half, Cartwright went up the right-wing, cut inside and provided Alderson with the perfect ball which the striker lashed home with his left foot, taking a knock in the process.

Three minutes later there was almost a third goal with Hutchison beating two defenders before hitting an angled shot which beat Horne but scraped the wrong side of the far post.

Luton were being taken apart and Alderson only just failed to reach a glorious through ball from Hutchison and Carr had a shot blocked from a neat pass by Green.

FLOATED

In the 35th minute, City had the ball in the net again but the "goal" was ruled out, apparently for an infringement by Ferguson as he forced the ball home from Green's cross.

A minute later Green's beautifully-judged chip beat Horne but floated just over.

For a short spell, effort and determination brought Luton back into the match again but they failed to create a chance

and City almost scored again when the speed of Cartwright created problems. He passed inside, Green and Ferguson played a one-two and Green fired in a shot which Horne saved just inside a post. Half-time.

Luton 0
City 2
Luton made a determined start and got in their first shot of the game. It was a good one from Anderson which had Ramsbottom leaping to turn the ball round a post. From the corner Luton appealed for a penalty when a shot bounced back off a defender but referee Davey waved play on.

Luton's pressure continued with two more corner and a second penalty appeal turned down by the referee in the 50th minute. This time City looked fortunate to escape as a linesman flagged for a foul on Ron Fitcher, who was tackled by Carr.

Three minutes later came an even more incredible escape for City when Anderson beat two defenders and Ramsbottom to set up Alston for a shot at an open goal. But, incredibly, the Australian World Cup player shot wide.

But the fire and fury of this Luton revival brought them the goal they had been threatening in the 55th minute.

City were left stranded with a run from Jim Ryan and, when the ball came over, ASTON beat Oakey in the muddy penalty area to prod a shot past Ramsbottom.

Three minutes later there was almost an equaliser with Aston's low centre beating Ramsbottom to strike the near post and flash across goal without anyone getting a touch.

At last City found some reprieve to launch two left-wing attacks which had Luton defending desperately.

And then, in the 64th minute, only a fabulous save from Horne prevented a third City goal. He threw himself upwards and backwards to hold a superb effort from Green.

BLOCKED

The action continued with Luton threatening an equaliser. It nearly came when Alston got a touch to a long centre from the right and Ramsbottom threw himself across goal to save.

Ferguson had two possible chances to increase City's lead but his first effort was saved by Horne and his second blocked by a defender.

A couple of minutes later Ramsbottom beat away a tremendous long-range swerving shot from left-back Buckley.

Catlin kicked the ball away for a corner as Ron Fitcher

ploughed his way through the goalmouth.

But, in the 79th minute, came a third goal for City, with Luton exposed by the speed of GREEN. He chased a long ball from Craven and beat both Horne and Buckley before putting the ball into an empty net. After the goal, Dugdale, suffering from a leg injury, was brought off with Holmes taking his place.

Attendance: 14,423.