

A VICTORY—BUT IS IT ENOUGH?

74/75

NOBODY can say that Luton are going down without a fight. The stiff upper lip was there again on Saturday, when they ran the Blues off St Andrews with a high-calibre performance that brought them their third and best away win of the season.

They still have an outside chance of staying up, but unfortunately they have only one match left — at home to Manchester City on Saturday.

Tottenham, who are above them on goal average, play Arsenal at Highbury on Saturday and Leeds at home next Monday.

Chelsea have Sheffield United and Everton at home. Birmingham also come into the scrap, but they are two points better off than Luton and Spurs, with two games to play — at Newcastle and at home to Sheffield United.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH
Birmingham City 1, Luton Town 4

His first goal, Luton's second, was a rarity. He sped in from the left, ghosted past three defenders with outstanding skill and control, and whacked the ball past the bemused Latchford with great power.

"I enjoyed that one," he laughed afterwards. "I think I am playing well at the moment because they are letting me play my way. I am a dribbler. It's the only game I know. I think I can continue scoring goals if they let me do it my way."

He became Luton's highest scorer with eight goals — and he's not played in half their matches.

Manager Harry Haslam said after the game: "Adrian's really doing it for us now. I think it's because he doesn't have to stand on his head for 10 minutes every day to get used to coming back from Australia."

"If we can play like this on Saturday we'll make Manchester City go a bit."

Scrappy

"We scored four good goals today. If it does nothing else it assures me that we will bounce straight back — if we go down."

Birmingham didn't look in the same street as Luton. They

MATCH DETAILS

BIRMINGHAM: Latchford, Page, Bryant, Kendall, Gallagher, Pendrey, Calderwood, Francis, Burns, Hatton, Taylor. Sub: Smith.

LUTON TOWN: Barber, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Litt, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Alston, West, Aston. Sub: Spiring.

JOHN RYAN (Luton) in 13 minutes.

ALSTON (Luton) in 44 minutes.

ALSTON (Luton) in 48 minutes.

FRANCIS (Birmingham) in 61 minutes.

HUSBAND (Luton) in 75 minutes.

were scrappy and jittery as their demanding fans got after them.

Tricking

Admittedly they hit the frame of Luton's goal twice. Calderwood hit the bar in the 14th minute, just a minute after John Ryan had put Luton ahead with his first goal of the season. It came from a direct free kick which he cracked past Latchford from about five yards outside the box.

When Burns hit a post in the 63rd minute, Luton were 3-1 up.

Alston had added a second early in the second half, when he classically headed in an Aston corner on the near post.

Francis pulled one back for the Blues after tricking Buckley and Faulkner with a

good run and shooting from a difficult position.

Alston and John Ryan were Luton's outstanding performers, but Jimmy Ryan had a fine match in midfield — until his dismissal near the end — and Aston again did well. What a marvellous season the former Manchester United winger has had.

Husband, West and Anderson put in tremendous effort, and it was Husband who scored Luton's fourth 14 minutes from the end. Alston allowed a pass from Jimmy Ryan to run past him into space, Husband chased it and cleverly lobbed the ball over the head of Latchford, who was charging out at him.

Willing

Husband and Alston had earlier missed easy-looking chances which cancelled out Birmingham's two against the posts.

Litt gave another strong and speedy performance, and Faulkner was as tough and willing as ever.

In goal Barber dealt well with a number of hard shots, and he must have been unsighted in the crowded goalmouth when Francis scored his goal.

This was a creditable, all-round performance from the Town. If only they had a couple more points to their name...

Enjoyed

If Luton had a couple more games, I have no doubt they would win them. They are in tremendous form at the moment and, as I said last week, far too good a side to be relegated to the Second Division.

Adrian Alston carried on where he left off against Leicester the previous week and turned in a performance of the highest quality.