

Battling Luton happy

By TREVOR WILLIAMSON
Birmingham 1 Luton ... 4

A SMILING Harry Haslam pronounced that he was convinced that his battling Luton side would beat Manchester City next Saturday after he had seen Town crush Birmingham at St Andrew's.

But beneath the smile fermented an anger borne from the sending off of Jimmy Ryan after a clash with Birmingham's Ken Burns in the closing minutes of a rousing second half.

Certainly from the Press box the decision by referee D. Richardson (Blackburn) — looked harsh, as it appeared Burns made a meal of the clash. Luton claimed that Burns had struck Ryan and "he had a thick ear to prove it."

That incident rubbed some of the polish from a spirited Luton

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performance in which their prodigious industry, whole-hearted application and tremendous panache rattled Birmingham into error.

John Ryan blazed in Luton's first goal (14 minutes) from a 25-yard free-kick, Alston with a shot and a header either side of half-time made the points Luton's and Husband rubbed salt in the wound when he chipped the ball over the goalkeeper following a slip by Page for the fourth.

Before that last one Francis gained a slight reward for his performance by capping a move he started with a fine goal. Even the substitution of Smith for Calderwood could not put Birmingham in with a chance.

True, Calderwood slammed a chance against the bar a minute after Ryan's opener, but City could never match Luton's enthusiasm and always looked yards slower.

Birmingham City. — Latchford: Page, Bryant, Kendall, Gallagher, Pendrey, Calderwood (Smith 66), Francis, Burns, Hatton, Taylor.

Luton Town. — Barber: Ryan (John), Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Litt, Ryan (Jim), Husband, Alston, West, Aeron.