

Blues disaster! Fans in revolt

BIRMINGHAM City tottered towards another survival struggle amidst scenes of open revolt at St. Andrew's.

As the team slumped humiliatingly to a four-goal hammering fans howled "Goodwin out."

And it was no isolated protest by a handful of individuals.

The cries echoed around the ground during the game and at the end a group of supporters stood by the players' tunnel to express their feelings.

It came at the end of a frightful fortnight for Blues.

Knocked out of the F.A.

Blues 1, Luton 4

74/75

Cup semi-final by Second Division Fulham, they are now in danger of losing the most treasured prize of all . . . First Division status.

If they are beaten at New-castle next weekend their security could all be decided

in the very last match of the season against Sheffield United at home.

Luton didn't just inflict defeat Blues . . . they made it a disaster.

From the moment full-back John Ryan shot them ahead with a 25 - yard free kick in the 14th minute they seldom

looked in danger of losing the match.

Had Jimmy Calderwood equalised soon after with a shot which hit the crossbar, it might have been a different story.

But that was the last time Blues threatened. Luton centre-forward Adrian Alston scored twice in the 44th and 48th minutes.

Trevor Francis hit a consolation goal in the 60th minute, but Jimmy Husband made it 4-1 two minutes later . . . and that's when the protests began in earnest.

It was difficult to believe that Luton are, themselves, in such a dangerous position at the foot of the table.

They have only an outside chance of staying up. Yet they outplayed Blues in every way.

● Out of touch

Manager Harry Haslam said: "We came with the greatest respect for City, but I thought that if we worked hard, showed aggression and played down the wings we could get a result."

And that's just what Luton did.

City were totally out of touch. Even skipper Howard Kendall had only one thing to celebrate . . . his pre-match presentation as Evening Mail Midlands Footballer of the Year.

He was not alone. No Blues player could feel satisfied with his performance on such an unhappy occasion.

The match ended with the controversial sending off of Luton schemer Jim Ryan for allegedly striking Kenny Burns in the stomach.

BLUES: Latchford; Page, Bryant, Kendall, Gallagher, Pendrey, Calderwood (Smith), Francis, Burns, Hatton, Taylor.

LUTON: Barber; John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, 1st, Jim Ryan, Husband, Alston, West, Aston, Sub: Spiring.



● Trevor Francis . . . a consolation goal on his 21st birthday.



● Freddie Goodwin . . . the fans were disappointed.

Goodwin takes the blame

WHILE Villa fans were prematurely celebrating promotion, Blues fans were protesting, and manager Freddie Goodwin said: "They were disappointed because the team were losing."

"They wanted to show their disappointment and, as I am the man who must accept responsibility, they made their feeling known towards me."

"I can understand their attitude. I would rather they took it out on me than the team."

Talking about the team's performance, he said: "There is still probably a reaction to the F.A. Cup defeat by Fulham but I am not putting that forward as an excuse. It was a disappointing performance and we gave away silly goals."

We'll be safe

"They are professionals and should be able to put a defeat behind them. Someone has to lose a semi-final every year."

"I still believe we will be safe if we get a point from the remaining games."

LUTON MANAGER HARRY HASLAM was angry over the decision to send off Jim Ryan.

He said: "It was one of those things that seem to be happening more and more—one professional getting another sent off."

"The referee sent Ryan off for hitting Burns, but it was the other way around and Jimmy's got the mark above his ear to prove it."