

LUTON'S HOPES LOOKING BRIGHT

Luton Town 1 Manchester City 1

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

LUTON'S HOPES of playing in the First Division next season are still alive — but only just.

Their draw against Manchester City today and Spurs' defeat at Highbury means the North London club would have to lose their final match at home to European Cup finalists Leeds on Monday for the Town to stay up.

Chelsea, who drew their final match against Everton, are relegated.

Some fans thought this could be Luton's last game in the First Division for some time, and a crowd of kids ran down the pitch to taunt the fans who had travelled from Manchester.

But a loudspeaker announcement reminding the fans of their usual good conduct sent them back to their own end rather shamefully.

They were herded back into the crowd by policemen and stewards and a couple who chose to be awkward were whisked out of the ground. And it was good to hear the fans applauding the police for their action.

The ground was nicely full as Luton kicked off to attack the Kenilworth Road end. And when Adrian Alston rolled the ball forward to Jimmy Husband the noise was deafening.

During the week, Manager Harry Haslam had called for one last great effort from the fans. They certainly answered the call.

In the first minute Alston, the man who has transformed the Luton attack, burst through on the left, took a pass from West, beat Hammond with one of his famous body swerves and cracked in a low shot that Corrigan had to turn round for a corner.

The flag kick was banged over by Aston and Anderson headed over the bar. But Luton's nerves were showing and this was underlined when Faulkner tried to pass back to Barber, but smacked the ball wide of goal for a City corner. Luckily it was a bad one and was headed away by Litt.

A good clearance by Buckley put Luton back in control and a piece of brilliant footwork by Husband sent Aston racing through the middle. He found Anderson with a good pass, but he was tackled quickly by Doyle and the chance was gone.

After a foul by Faulkner, Marsh pushed a short free kick through to Oakes whose terrific drive was well saved by the diving Barber.

A clever free kick from Jimmy Ryan over the Manchester wall produced a quick header from Anderson, and Luton claimed Hammond had handled the ball. It looked a bit that way from the Press box, but all Luton got out of it was a corner.

Marsh and Faulkner seemed to be having a good old scrap and, strangely enough, both seemed to be enjoying it.

A deathly silence fell over Kenilworth Road in the 13th

Fans go wild as Ryan answers the call

minute when City went ahead with a fine individual goal from Tueart.

A bad back pass from Jimmy Ryan was knocked on by Marsh and Tueart ran round Buckley who was Luton's last line of defence and scored with a neat shot into the corner of the net giving Barber no chance.

Luton were in further trouble with another bad back pass — this time from Buckley, who gave away a corner to City. It was swung over from the right and Doyle beat the Luton defence in the air to head over the top.

Luton had yet another let-off in the 17th minute when a bad defensive mistake let in Daniels, whose fierce shot was kicked on to the bar by Barber and bounced back into play.

Deathly silence

The Luton forwards were trying desperately to get their rhythm back and a good run by Husband ended with him having a shot half blocked and the sting taken out of it by Booth.

But the humour was still in the game and when John Ryan put a bad pass into touch, Rodney Marsh ran up and pointed out the way he should have done it. Ryan patted him on the backside to thank him for his trouble.

The Luton crowd tried to lift the team, but they were doing more about it than the players at one stage and some bad passing in midfield had Luton looking jaded.

But Husband got hold of things and he sent Aston away on the left. Donachie got to the cross just before Alston. And then Buckley wasted a good opportunity by banging a free kick into an empty goalmouth.

Incredibly John Ryan put another clearance into the crowd and again Marsh was on hand to point out the error of his ways. It would have been funny had Luton not been in such a desperate situation.

The news that Arsenal were beating Spurs 1-0 brought the biggest cheer of the afternoon and immediately the crowd roared back into action to push the Luton team.

The Oak Road choir began to chant "Arsenal" and at the other end the City fans were singing "Tottenham, Tottenham". In the 32nd minute Corrigan tipped over a good header from Husband following a cross by Aston. Again Luton were back in their stride.

When Luton won two successive corners, skipper Colin Bell called Marsh back from attack to help out which he did with a neat clearance.

A couple of minutes later full-back Donachie ran on to a Marsh pass and tested Barber with a long shot. Barber was well up to the task. Whenever Luton tried to attack, the City penalty area always seemed full of huge defenders. It was like running against a brick wall.

After Marsh had tripped Jimmy Ryan, Anderson was unlucky to head Ryan's free kick just wide. But he got a deflection and Aston's corner brought another challenge from Anderson and a foul on West by Doyle.

But, however good their build-up, Luton fell down in the box. And it is from here, of course, that goals are scored. And when Aston took a well-headed pass from Alston, he chose to shoot from long range and put the ball wide.

Luton's best effort of the first half came three minutes before the break when Jimmy Ryan pushed a short free kick to Buckley whose powerful left foot slammed the ball through the City defence — but straight into the hands of Corrigan.

HT: 0-1

A cleverly taken free kick by Marsh nearly caught the Luton defence napping, but Faulkner followed Daniels quickly to spoil the City man's header.

The players were as frustrated as the followers when they failed to get into the game as they had been doing in recent weeks. There were howls of anguish from the terraces as Division One football drained away from Luton.

Anderson was a bit slow in midfield and was robbed by Hartford who sent Daniels racing through the middle, but Barber was out of his goal quickly to save the situation.

The effort was still there in the Luton side but nothing, it seemed, would go right for them. Passes went astray and 50-50 balls always seemed to go to City. Each time Luton got the ball there was a buzz of expectancy from the faithful. But the team did not seem able to answer the call.

There was a glimmer of hope when an accurate free kick from Jimmy Ryan, aimed for Anderson, was headed behind by a defender. And Luton won two successive corners as they hurled themselves into attack.

But their efforts came to nothing when the referee adjudged that Faulkner had fouled Corrigan. A centre by Anderson was headed on by Alston and Aston volleyed a hard left-footer just over the crossbar.

And when they built another attack, the final centre from John Ryan was far too strong and again Luton's hopes hit the dust. In the 61st minute Alston was booked for dissent after a hard tackle by Booth.

Then Tueart was booked for a similar offence after a foul by Donachie on Anderson. After a mistake in midfield by Anderson the crowd began to chant for substitute Andy King, also a midfield player, to make an appearance.

As King began to warm up City mounted another attack and it was a tackle by Faulkner that forced Tueart to shoot over the top.

Luton's long awaited equaliser came in the 72nd minute when Corrigan missed a centre-cum-shot from Jimmy Ryan which went straight into the net with Alston and King on hand if they were needed.

Then Steve Buckley had the crowd on its feet when he ran the full length of the field before smashing a shot just wide of the Manchester goal.

With 12 minutes left Barber made a diving save to a shot from Doyle. Then when Jimmy Husband was brought down just outside the box, John Ryan ran up to take the free kick, but it slammed into the defensive wall.

MATCH DETAILS

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

MANCHESTER CITY: Corrigan, Hammond, Donachie, Doyle, Booth, Oakes, Hartford, Bell, Marsh, Daniels, Tueart.
Sub: Keegan.

REFEREE: Mr D. Wallace (Crewe).

TUEART (Manchester City) in 13 minutes.

JIM RYAN (Luton) in 72 minutes

ATTENDANCE: 20,768

The verdict...

LUTON kept their faithful followers on the brink for another couple of days by managing to draw against City this afternoon.

But for much of the match Kenilworth Road was edged with disappointment as the Town trailed to a 13th minute goal by Tueart and looked as if they were going to go down by losing.

Luton were so jittery that it wasn't true. Even the news that Tottenham were losing at Arsenal failed to lift them and City, playing with more composure, looked the better side.

But they could still fight and a deafening roar went up in the 72nd minute when a shot-cum-cross from Jimmy Ryan went straight

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