

TOWN TURN IT ON FOR FIVE MINUTES

By BRIAN SWAIN

TWO GOALS in as many minutes gave the Town their first win in four games against a Notts County side which had come to defend in depth. The strange thing was that the Town had played far worse than they did at Spurs and Brighton, where they lost each time.

"We were brilliant for about five minutes," said manager Harry Haslam. "But we played some rubbish for most of the rest."

The major talking point was an astonishing refereeing display by Mr David Smith, a maintenance engineer from Essex. He had a nightmare afternoon and upset both teams with his decisions.

The most crucial came six minutes from time, when County were trying to hit back after the Town had gone two-up. Paul Futchter had been beaten by

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Hooks and in an attempt to repair the damage brought Hooks down from behind.

Futchter held his head in despair, because Hooks fell into the penalty area, and Luton hearts missed a beat as they waited for the referee to decide whether the foul was inside or outside the box.

We could hardly believe it when Mr Smith waved play on, deciding that there was no foul at all.

County manager Ron Fenton blew his top, and was still seething when the game ended. He went on to the pitch to try to talk to Mr Smith, and his own players pulled him away.

"I have never seen a worse decision in my life," said Fenton. "It was disgraceful, and I shall be reporting that referee."

"You work hard all week, and then see all the effort wasted because one man doesn't do his job. I'd like to see what the official assessor thinks about it—this man should be assessed right out of the league."

Fenton claimed that County should have had two penalties. The second, he said, was due when Lil Fuccillo cleared off the line with his hands. The Town players disputed that, but agreed that Futchter should have been penalised for the tackle on Hooks.

So did the Town manager. "It was definitely a foul," he said. "But it was just outside the area. Notts County should have been given a free kick."

"But this referee didn't do us any favours—and he didn't do the game a favour by coming here. Ricky Hill's booking was an appalling decision."

Hill, like several Town players, had shown his abilities in bright flashes. With Alan West back in action after injury, the Town were able to do as they pleased in midfield.

County, weakened by a long sick list, played with a back four plus a sweeper, and the Town's front men found it difficult to find ways through the crowded penalty area.

Ron Futchter, Phil Boersma and Jim Husband all had a frustrating time and County's tactics kept the score-sheet blank for 52 minutes.

Boersma wasted the best chance by blazing over the

● **Ricky Hill blasts a drive goalwards during the Town's purple patch. His quick control set him up for this volley, but although the ball beat the defensive cover, it rocketed just over the bar.**

ACTION PICTURES
by
STEVE TEMPLEMAN



● **LIL FUCCILLO:** The midfield man whose first goal of the season broke the deadlock and paved the way for the Town's victory over Notts County at Kenilworth Road.

bar from an angle, and the Town's best opportunities seemed to arise when Steve Buckley and Paul Price overlapped to give the attack more width.

Fuccillo looked effective with some thrusting runs from midfield, and took the first goal with calm assurance in the 52nd minute.

It came after a clearance by Paul Futchter to his twin brother. Ron laid the ball back for West, and he played the perfect, simple pass — between two defenders for Fuccillo to swoop and score with a well-placed shot after taking the ball forward a couple of yards into the penalty area.

For the next five minutes the Town's soccer bubbled with ideas, and in the 54th minute West started the move for the second goal. He sent Buckley through on the left, and although the full-back's strong run was halted in the penalty area, Boersma snapped up

the ball

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Match Details

LUTON TOWN 2, NOTTS COUNTY 0

Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Futchter; Fuccillo, Hill, West; Husband, Ron Futchter, Boersma.

Sub: Carr, not used.

NOTTS COUNTY: McManus; Benjamin, O'Brien, Ladd (Sims, 78 minutes), Stubbs, Chapman; Richards, Birchenall, Mann; Bradd, Hooks.

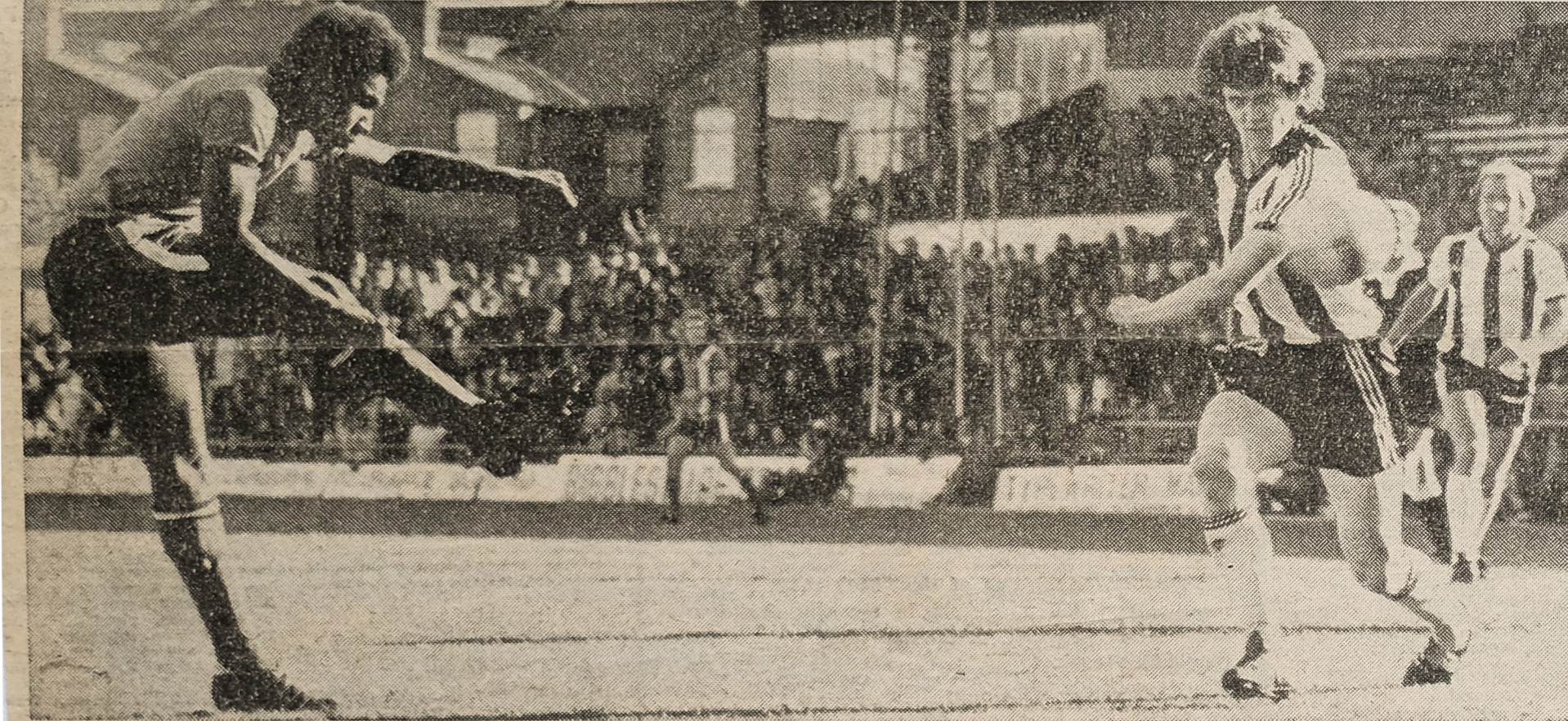
THE GOALS: Lil Fuccillo, 52 minutes, low drive at the end of an attack down the middle mounted by Paul Futchter, Ron Futchter and Alan West; Phil Boersma, 54 minutes, after County failed to clear a pass by Buckley.

ATTENDANCE: 7,593, lowest of the season so far.

REFEREE: David Smith, Hornechurch: quite the worst whistler's performance seen for years at Kenilworth Road.

BOOKINGS: Ricky Hill for a dangerous tackle on O'Brien; Lloyd Richards for a foul on Buckley; Ron Futchter for a foul on Stubbs.

ENTERTAINMENT: Very poor for most of the game, with the Town turning it on for only five minutes out of the 90.



● The goal that killed Notts County: Phil Boersma escapes the attentions of goalkeeper McManus and puts the Town two up.