

# TEAMWORK IS A WINNER

## Brighton Details

LUTON TOWN 1, BRIGHTON 0

Half-time: 1-0

Match Verdict: ★ ★ ★ ★

TOWN: Aleksic; Price, Buckley, Carr, Jones; Wewt, Hill, Fuccillo; Stein, Ron Fletcher, Boersma, Sub: Husband, not used.

BRIGHTON: Steele; Cattlin (Potts, 65 mins), Williams, Rollings, Lawrenson; Horton, Towner, Clark; Ward, Maybank, O'Sullivan.

THE GOAL: Phil Boersma, 32 minutes, diving header from cross by Brian Stein following nine-pass build-up which started near the Town's penalty area. It should win Goal of the Month competition on BBC's match of the day.

ATTENDANCE: 13,200, biggest league gate of the season, but Brighton brought 3,000 of them.

REFEREE: Alex Hamil, Wolverhampton. A credit to the game who got on with the job quietly without trying to become a TV star.

BOOKING: Chris Cattlin, of Brighton, for dissent. Withdrawn by his manager later when it looked as though he had lost control of his own common sense.

ENTERTAINMENT: Very good, and all supplied by the

BRIGHTON manager Alan Mullery put his finger on the cause of the Town's happy old-year farewell after seeing his side all but run off the park at Kenilworth Road on Saturday. "Man for man, your players did a lot more than ours," he said.

"You didn't have any really brilliant individualists, but the whole team played well and they deserved to win."

Brighton, dreaming of a second successive promotion season, were the also-rans on a day when the Town looked cool and confident at the back, powerful in midfield, and full of ideas in attack.

And the score-line bears no reflection on their right to take both points—Mullery could have had no complaints if the Town had scored three or four.

Conversely, the fact that there was only one goal in it meant that the game was alive and marginally in doubt right to the final whistle.

But Brighton were a huge disappointment, and manager Mullery said that they had played well below their best form. The reason, of course, was that they weren't allowed to play well, and for that the greatest credit goes to the Town's midfield department of Alan West, Ricky Hill and Lil Fuccillo.

They took command of the middle, with the result that the Town's weakened defence rarely came under concerted pressure. Injury stand-ins Graham Jones and David Carr played their part in ensuring that the rear-guard was always tight and disciplined.

In attack Brighton were painfully unadventurous in comparison to the Town. The major difference was that both sides needed to graft and think to create openings, and the Town did that better.

After a wretched Christmas, Brighton came to Luton to concentrate on not giving anything away. They hoped to make it a stalemate in midfield, keep it tight at the back, and perhaps grab a goal on the break.

Town skipper West realised the difficulties, and overcame them even though some of the crowd didn't realise the need for patience. The midfield had to probe for openings and in the end the careful, thoughtful approach was worth the points.

In attack, Ron Fletcher, Brian Stein and Phil Boersma all carried more threat than their counterparts. Brighton's golden boy Peter Ward was obscured by mediocrity, and if Teddy Maybank really is worth the £200,000 transfer fee paid for him, what price Fletcher, Stein and Boersma?

Stein's introduction has brought a new sense of urgency and excitement to the attack, and although he was out of luck with a brilliant early lob which hit the bar, he played a major role in the match-winning goal.

The BBC cameras made it a leading contender for Match of the Day's goal of the month, but even they did not do the move full justice, showing only half of it.

It began deep in the Town's own half with Buckley winning possession near the penalty area. He set off a move which carried the ball through nine passes via Boersma, West, Price, Stein.

Stein made space down the right wing and still on the run clipped over a perfect centre. It drilled through a gap between defenders, dropped too far in front of goal to give the keeper any chance, and was given the finish it deserved, with Boersma completing a 40-yard sprint to dive full-length and head a goal to remember.

Brighton were a beaten side from then on, and only Eric Steele's brave goalkeeping stood between them and a thrashing.