

SET FOR A NEW YEAR

FOR THE opening 15 minutes at Carrow Road, on Monday, Luton Town looked exactly what they are—next season's First Division side giving a shattering lesson to one from last season.

Norwich City were all but beaten by three goals in the first 14 minutes, yet the stunning effect of that start almost let the Canaries back in.

Their work done, the Town started to stroll around a little, and only great work by Jake Findlay in goal prevented Norwich's biggest crowd of the season from enjoying an unlikely revival.

For the last 30 minutes of the first half, and for the opening 20 minutes of the second, Norwich created more scoring chances.

They pulled one back just before the interval, and manager Ken Brown said: "We might easily have got a second, and that

Report by Brian Swain Pictures: Mark Richards

would have made a real cup-tie of it."

Town manager David Pleat gave his men a roasting with the half-time tea, which must have sounded odd to players who had already proved their class.

They had pulled off the equivalent of running a couple of four-minute miles at the start of a marathon to win the race.

The blistering opening

saw the Town create three chances in the first 14 minutes, and score from each. Raddy Antic, in the side because Ricky Hill failed a fitness test, clipped in the first with a superb bending and dipping drive from 30 yards after seeing Chris Woods standing on his six-yard line.

That was in the third minute, and seven minutes later Antic put through the best pass I have seen this season to send Steve White clear. The striker rifled in his 14th goal of the season before either of the Norwich central defenders realised the danger.

Within four minutes Mal Donaghy won a tackle in midfield, and lofted another inch-perfect pass over the defence for Brian Stein to run through and crack home the Town's third.

Norwich fought hard to try to get back into the game, and the Town, going off the boil, had to defend in depth as the home side forced ten first-half corners.

It was mostly defensive practice, with Clive Goodyear and Donaghy heading long hopeful crosses away, and the Town looking promising on the break.

But Findlay had to earn his bonus with three vital saves in a ten-minute spell, one of them a blinder from John Deehan.

The Town ought to have scored more, with David Moss and White both unable to make the best use of good openings when

HAPPY



● **CELEBRATION:** Kirk Stephens congratulates Raddy Antic for giving the Town a perfect start with a goal in three minutes in their last match of 1981.

Norwich were caught stretched by counter-attacks.

Norwich piled on plenty of pressure without showing a lot of variety in attack, and Keith Bertschin missed the clearest chance of the whole game when he failed to make contact when he should have made a simple scoring header right in front of goal.

Two minutes before the interval Norwich hopes were raised higher when Deehan, on loan from West Brom, marked his league debut with a simple goal after a long free kick had been headed on into the penalty area.

Mark Aizlewood had to fight hard to stop Norwich making right wing attacks count as the home side raised their game at the start of the second half, but with Moss switching to the right wing the Town slowly regained control.

The midfield, however,

was not always as quick into the tackle as it might have been, with the result that the entertainment at both ends was non-stop, and fascinating to watch.

I had the feeling that the Town didn't deserve to lose, yet were in danger of being caught by a bad break, and certainly Norwich had all the luck that was going—Brian Horton and Moss both hit the bar with crashing drives which beat the goalkeeper.

White made the run of the match when he took the ball from deep inside his own half into the opposing penalty area. He exchanged passes with Stein to leave the Norwich defence in disarray, but then hit his low drive narrowly wide of the far post.

But by the last ten minutes the Norwich fire had burned out and their manager had to admit: "Luton looked a very good side. Both teams gave value for money, and I think Luton will be in the First Division next season."

Match Details

NORWICH CITY 1, LUTON TOWN 3
Half-time: 1—3

LUTON TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Antic, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss. Sub: Ingram, not used.

NORWICH: Woods; Symonds, Walford, Watson, Downs; Barham, Muzinic (Mendham, 71 mins), McGuire, Bennett; Deehan, Bertschin.

THE GOALS: Raddy Antic, 3 mins, 30-yard bender into top corner; Steve White, 10 mins, shot from brilliant through-pass by Antic; Brian Stein, 14 mins, shot after over-the-top ball perfectly weighted and placed by Mal Donaghy; John Deehan for Norwich, 43 mins, after long free kick headed on.

OTHER STRIKES AT GOAL: Town six saved, four off target, two hit the bar; Norwich 11 saved, six wide. Corners: 12-7 to Norwich.

ATTENDANCE: 19,348, easily Norwich's biggest of the season. Only St James's Park, Newcastle, has housed a bigger attendance for a Town game this season.

REFEREE: Martin Scott, Nottingham — did not have a perfect game, and his booking of Clive Goodyear for an alleged foul was highly dubious. It looked like a case of a ref stamping down for not getting to grips with earlier slight incidents.

ENTERTAINMENT: A lovely day out for the big following from Luton, with both sides contributing to a game which was much closer than the result suggests.