

PILED RIVER ENDS THE FRUSTRATION

Luton Town 1, Cambridge United 0

A STUNNING GOAL by Brian Horton, his first in the league for the club, pushed Luton Town a step nearer the First Division at Kenilworth Road on Tuesday night. He ended 76 minutes of agony and frustration to give the Town victory over a stubbornly defensive Cambridge United outfit.

Six points from two home games in four days leaves the Town well clear of the rest at the top of the Second Division, yet mid-table Cambridge may have given the Town a foretaste of what to expect next season in the First.

Horton's spectacular match-winner 14 minutes from time ended the almost frightening possibility that Cambridge might hang on to a point or, even worse to consider, snatch two.

Manager John Docherty made it clear that he came to Luton with respect bordering on the edge of abject fear. For long spells Cambridge played with eight men at the back, although Docherty later explained that in fact he had played four defenders and five men across the middle.

He had three centre-halves in the side, and cheerfully admitted that his priority had been to try to stop the Town scoring, then hope to nick a goal. "It's not our job to come here and let Luton turn us over," he said when asked about Cambridge's ultra-cautious approach. "We came to prevent that happening."

"If you get into the First Division you are going to get a lot of teams who will make things difficult for you. We were unlucky not to nick a point, and we might have got all three if we had made our chances count."

Pushed hard by some questions, Mr Docherty very nearly admitted that he had not come to Luton to entertain, but it was significant that the chances created by his side stood out in his mind—the Town were caught only twice in 90 minutes by attacks that might have produced danger, with Roger Gibbins having a shot deflected by a defender and Tommy O'Neill being foiled by a spreading save by Jake Findlay.

For more than half the game Cambridge managed to stifle the Town, and for the first half in particular the Town's passing was below par.

Cambridge were booed off the pitch at half-time for their negative approach, but the fans had more to cheer about after the interval when the Town really opened up.

Defenders pushed forward, the midfield dragged opponents out of position, and Steve White and Brian Stein kept all three centre-halves busy.

The loss of the injured Lil Fuccillo did nothing to upset the Town's rhythm, and Cambridge had little to offer beyond brave defiance, a good goalkeeper, and a little luck when they needed it.

Richard Key took the star billing as Cambridge took a pounding. He saved from David Moss with his legs, then did it again when a pass by Kirk Stephens

gave Stein the cleanest chance of the match.

Between times, with the Town looking menacing with almost every move, Cambridge were saved as rocket shots by Stephens and Ricky Hill hammered against the woodwork. Hill finally netted in the 69th minute, but had the effort ruled out for a foul on the goalkeeper and as the minutes ticked away football faced a little local tragedy as Cambridge seemed destined to battle through to a 0-0 draw.

But Horton struck with a classic goal in the 76th minute. He was looking for the chance to set up another Town attack, about 30 yards from goal. Pressure from two defenders forced him to make a quick sidestep and as a tiny gap



● **STUNNER:** Skipper Brian Horton, surrounded and 30 yards from goal, blasts in his spectacular match-winner against Cambridge.

Report by Brian Swain Pictures: Mark Richards

opened the skipper let fly with a thundering drive which was too good even for the admirable Key.

Even Docherty admitted: "The goal was worth the points. It was tremendous, and I can't have any complaints about the result."

Horton's goal did football a favour. Cambridge may not have been disgraced, but their approach to the game seems to question whether there is general realisation that the fans want entertainment. This was Cambridge's tenth game this year and their results have hardly been inspiring: four 0-0 draws, two 0-1 defeats, a 1-2 defeat and two 1-0 home victories. No wonder the crowd went crazy on Saturday when Cambridge

actually scored twice in one match to earn a draw with Grimsby.

Perhaps when a team is scoring an average of only half a goal a game, strong defence is the only option left open to a manager.

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill, Horton, Fuccillo (Anic 50 mins); Stein, White, Moss.

CAMBRIDGE: Key; Donaldson, Smith, Fallon, Turner; Murray, O'Neill (Cartwright 89 mins), Spriggs, Gibbins; Reilly, Mayo.

THE GOAL: Brian Horton 76 minutes, 30-yard piledriver.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town ten saved, two wide, two hit the woodwork, one netted but disallowed for a foul; Cambridge three saved and three wide.

CORNERS: 9-7 to the Town.

ATTENDANCE: 10,597, lowest at Kenilworth Road since November.

REFEREE: David Lettis, Basingstoke.

BOOKINGS: Chris Turner for a foul on Steve White, Roger Gibbins for a foul on Mal Donaghy.

ENTERTAINMENT: Poor in the first half, but better in the second when the Town got into their stride. Cambridge were interested only in avoiding defeat and were lucky to escape a ham-