

A DISMAL DAY — BUT A VERY GOOD YEAR

Herald
sport
scene

SUPER-STOPPER Clive Goodyear, thrust into the first team last season by necessity, was Luton's bright light in a gloomy affair at the Hawthorns.

A complicated knee injury to Mike Saxby left the door open for the young centre-back. And he strode through it to play a confident and commanding part in the championship success.

Goodyear began this term still as the unsung hero of that title triumph but undeterred he has knuckled down to the task of subduing some of Europe's most deadly strikers.

But First Division giants, almost all household names, have gone away with their tails between their legs as young Clive has footballed them into impotence.

Massive England striker Cyrille Regis was the latest star name to fail to get to grips with Goodyear.

Just once, midway through the second half, was the black powerhouse able to slip away and send in an effort that clipped the bar.

But Regis is in good company in the Subdued Strikers Club. Goodyear gave the likes of Stapleton and Mariner little chance to shine either.

Manager David Pleat spent the latter half of last season and much of the present campaign dropping hints to Fleet Street's representatives at the post-match press conferences.

He would ever-so-

WEST BROM 1 LUTON 0

Whitehead

82/83



● Goodyear
— good game

subtly sow the seed in reporters' minds that Goodyear was worth writing about.

But centre backs have to work harder and wait longer to get their share of the headlines than do strikers.

After Saturday's game Pleat said Goodyear "handled the big fellow very well."

And, it has to be said, the personal duel between the two was the most interesting aspect of Saturday's game.

Luton never got into top gear, let alone the overdrive that has taken them to top spot in the Hatters Computer Data attacking table.

A 24th minute catastrophe settled the match. Kirk Stephens, so reliable for so long, tried to pass back to keeper Alan Judge but succeeded in presenting Clive Whitehead with the easiest of chances.

Judge was in goal because Jake Findlay was ruled out with a neck injury.

West Brom also made changes, bringing back keeper Tony Godden and finding a place for brilliant full-back Derek Satham, sidelined for so long through injury.

The Hatters' only real first half chances came when Paul Walsh tried a couple of speculative long-range efforts which

MATCH



FOCUS

struck the keeper on the chest.

Luton showed more bite as the second period got underway. As the pressure began to have an effect on the home side, Lil Fuccillo and Brian Horton linked well at a free kick, only for Horton's shot to fly just wide.

Inevitably as Luton pushed forward they left themselves exposed at the back.

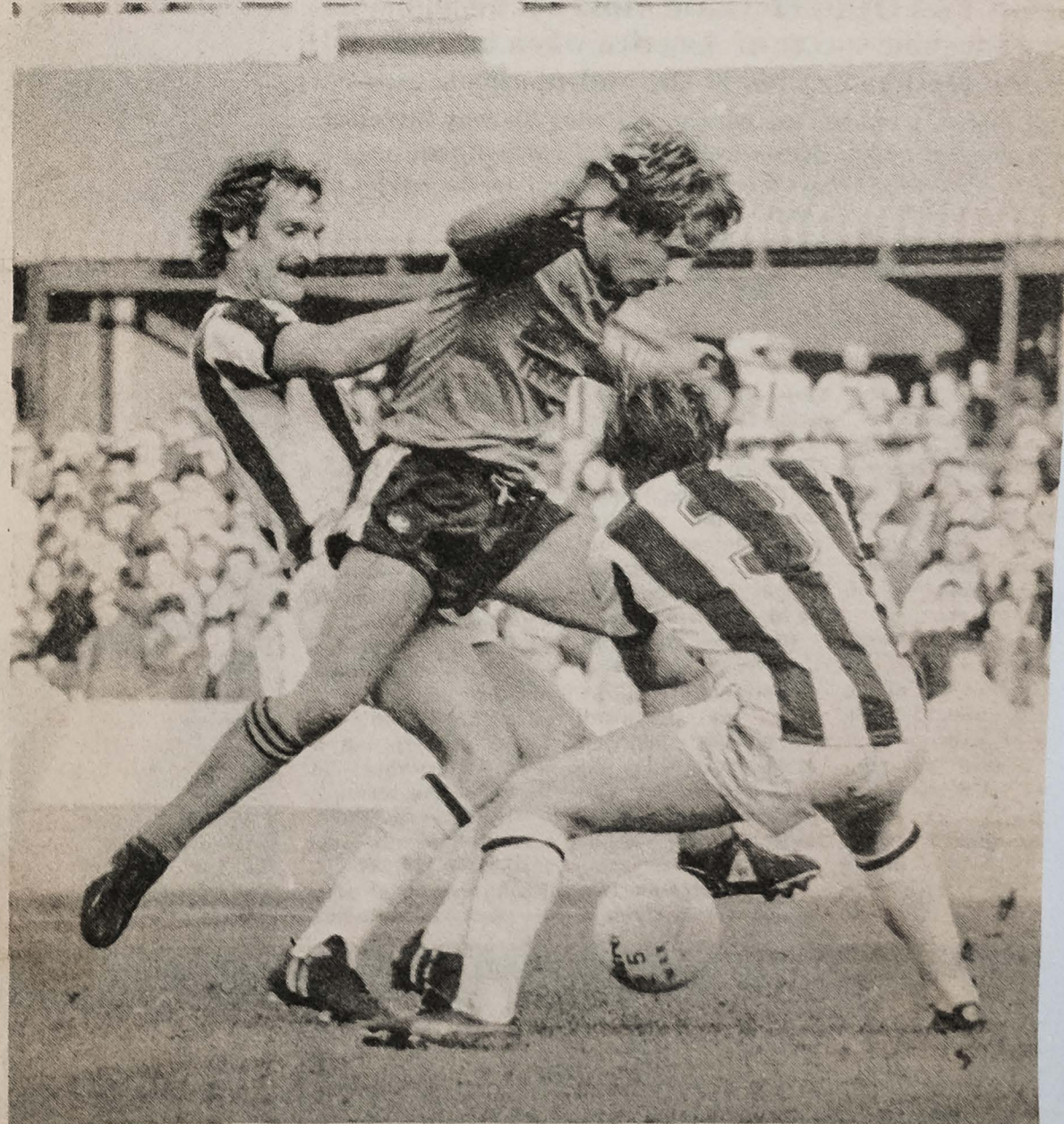
That was when Regis had his rare sight of goal and Satham brushed a post.

David Pleat's verdict was realistic: "We made one big mistake and it was well punished and that was decisive."

"We had a few below-par performances. Albion have a lot of good footballers in their side."

● Crowd: 16,345.

— Graham Punter



● Walsh sandwich! Paul has nowhere to go, thanks to a close encounter with the Albion defence.