

Position is helped by rivals

WINNING a six-pointer at Brighton took the pressure off the Town just in time as they prepare for their next three difficult games, two against Manchester United and one against Liverpool.

Other results went kindly for the Town, because they were the only one of the bottom seven teams to win. They moved up one place, to 16th.

They moved ahead of Southampton on goal difference, thanks to Watford, who reclaimed third place with a 2-0 home victory over the Saints.

Liverpool, the next league visitors to Kenilworth Road, are still ten points clear at the top of the table and their 1-0 win at Anfield nailed Birmingham even more firmly to the foot of the table.

Birmingham, who haven't won a game this year, are stranded on 23 points, one fewer than Brighton.

Norwich are third from bottom after being beaten at home by Everton, but underland continue to battle on. Their 1-1 draw at Spurs took their current unbeaten run to seven league games.

Swansea are also fighting for every point, and collected another in a 0-0 draw at Coventry.

Places in the lower reaches of the First Division:

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheff Wed	25	9	6	10	31	33	33
Sheff Co	25	9	4	12	32	44	31
Luton Town	25	7	9	9	46	51	30
Southampton	25	8	6	11	29	41	30
Swansea	25	7	6	12	31	36	27
Derby	25	6	9	10	28	38	27
Wolverhampton	25	7	5	13	26	41	26
Brighton	25	6	6	13	23	48	24
Birmingham	25	4	11	10	19	35	23



IT WENT THATAWAY: Graham Moseley hopelessly wrong-footed as the ball hits the net for the Town's second goal, headed in by Brighton defender Gary Stevens.



PERFECT FINISH: Ricky Hill leaves Moseley and Foster helpless as he shoots his second goal.

LUCKY BREAKS EASE LEAGUE WORRIES

Match Details

BRIGHTON & HOVE ALB 2
LUTON TOWN 4
Half-time: 0-2

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Thomas; Hill, Horton, Turner (Kellock, 10 mins); Walsh, Bunn, Moss.

BRIGHTON: Moseley; Ramsey, Pearce, (Ritchie, 41 mins), Foster, Stevens; Case, Grealish, Smillie; Ward, Smith, Robinson.

THE GOALS: Ricky Hill, header from Brian Horton free kick, 5 mins; Gary Stevens own goal, header from Horton free kick, 24 mins; Andy Ritchie for Brighton, 69 mins; Hill for Luton 71 mins; Grealish for Brighton 73 mins; Jimmy Case own goal for Luton 74 mins.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved, one wide, one hit the bar and one disallowed when Walsh netted after Bunn and the goalkeeper collided; Brighton five saved, nine wide, one hit the post. Corners: 10-2 to Brighton.

REFEREE: David Letts, Aldershot. Was given an easy afternoon by both sides, with not a moment's malice from either.

ATTENDANCE: 11,785—five gates in the Second Division were higher.

ENTERTAINMENT: Six goals can't be bad, but it was never a classic.

after Saturday's trip to Kenilworth Road.

Brighton manager Jimmy Melia, trying to win the job on a permanent basis, confessed that he couldn't believe his eyes at the Goldstone Ground as his team scored four times and lost.

His collection of honest workers had toiled away and put the Town defence under a lot of pressure. They had battled back from two down and looked capable of picking up a point with 20 minutes to go when they scored.

Their goalkeeper had not had a serious save to make, yet a few isolated flashes of real class from the Town were enough to take the points.

I thought the Town deserved some reward for their gritty determination in defence, where Clive Goodyear and Kirk Stephens were outstanding. Mal Donaghy was not far behind, and when the heat was on Brian Horton made an important contribution against his old club.

Yet the Town did not produce the sort of soccer that had accounted for West Ham. Too many passes were hopeful efforts which gave men no more than a 50-50 chance of winning possession.

But Brighton were even worse in that respect. For all their pressure, a lot of it came from a series of Watford-style moves. They were predictable enough to allow the Town's defence to organise itself without too much difficulty.

Injuries forced both sides to make changes during the game, and once more the Town had the luck. When Wayne Turner went off with a hole in his right

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN
PICTURES: MARK RICHARDS

foot caused by a stud, Billy Kellock went on to slot into midfield without causing too much disruption.

FULL-BACK

Brighton lost full-back Graham Pearce and their sub was striker Andy Ritchie. They had to change formation throughout the side, with Tony Grealish dropping back to full-back, where he looked less than comfortable.

I thought the Town might have put more pressure on him than they did, but the other side of the coin is that Brighton were made to look so poor in their general attacking awareness that the Town did not have to reach great heights to beat them.

The game was never a thriller, despite the six goals, and I drove home believing Brighton are one of the three sides who will be relegated this year.

They were little better than the team who crashed by five goals at Kenilworth Road in September.

In creative ability Ricky

Hill and Paul Walsh were the best on view, and Hill was unlucky not to score his first hat-trick. He hit the bar in the last minute.

Hill had headed the Town into the lead in the fifth minute from a free kick by Horton and after Jake Findlay had made a couple of saves the Town's first lucky break produced the second goal. Horton punted another free-kick into the penalty area, Mal Donaghy headed it goalwards and Graham Moseley moved to his right to make a simple save. But Gary Stevens, trying to clear, deflected the ball into the net past Moseley's left hand.

Brighton battered away without too much invention for most of the game after that, and early in the second half, with their fans roaring them on, they threatened to get back into it.

Mitchell Thomas was stretched a time or two, and when Jimmy Case went past him Neil Smillie was put clear. Findlay stood rooted as Smillie's shot

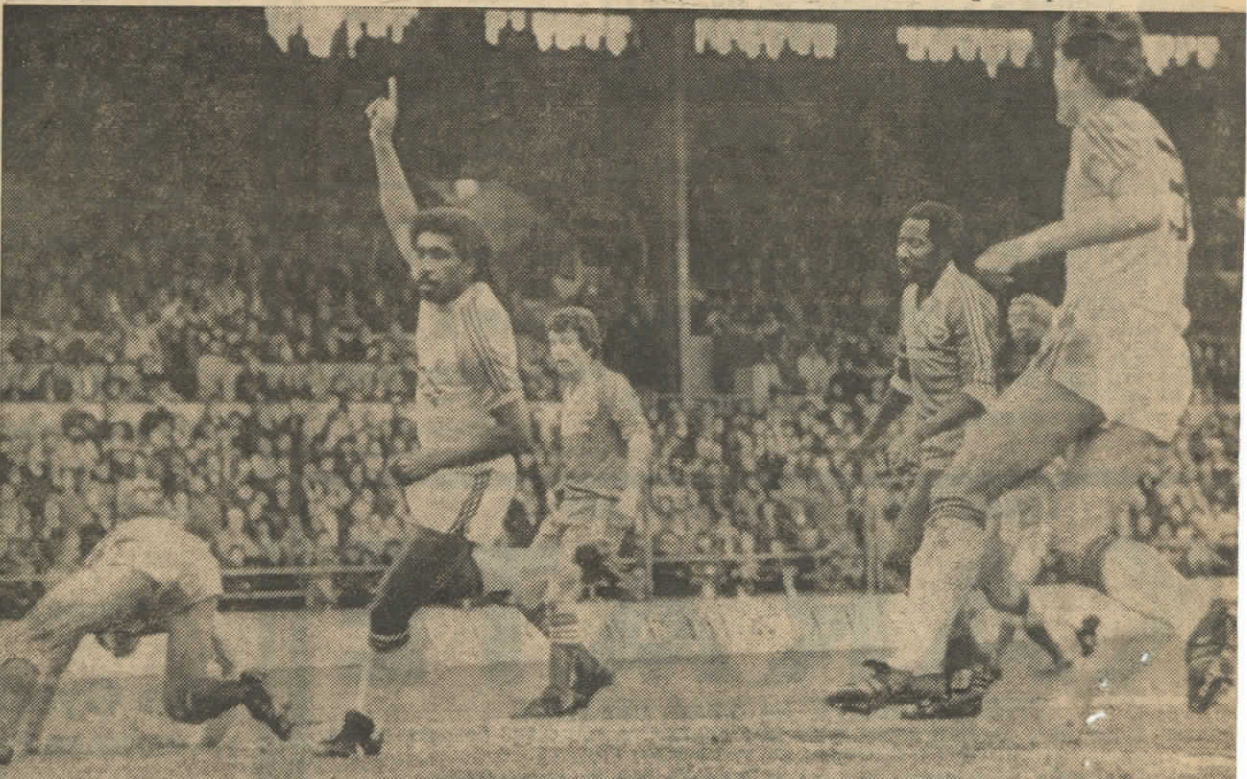
whipped across goal and hit the far post, and bounce straight back into the goalkeeper's arms. He didn't even have to move to make the save.

BRILLIANT

Case set up another move from midfield which was carried on by Mick Robinson and Smillie to give Ritchie a goal in the 69th minute, but two minutes later the Town put together the best move of the match to restore their two-goal advantage. The worked the ball from defence, through midfield, and Hill took Walsh's incisive pass to drift past a marker and lob a brilliant goal.

Brighton came back again when Grealish smacked in a 25-yarder to make it 3-1 to the Town, but the crazy spell produced its fourth goal in five minutes with the daftest and luckiest break of the day in the 74th minute.

David Moss attacked down the left wing, and crossed towards the near post. With no Town player anywhere near Case met the ball with a thumping header to score in the corner past his astonished goalkeeper.



ONE UP: Ricky Hill signals his first goal after drifting into space to beat grounded Graham Moseley with a header in the fifth minute.