

Emotional reprieve for Coventry

COVENTRY CITY 1,
LUTON TOWN 0

MEMORIES of Maine Road, Manchester, on May 14, 1983, crowded back for Town fans at Highfield Road and made it difficult to begrudge Coventry their emotional success on a night when nothing less than victory would keep their First Division hopes alive.

Town boss David Pleat had promised football in general, and Norwich City in particular, that his team would not take the game lightly, and would try to win.

Players backed that policy, and with Ricky Hill outstanding they threatened to humiliate Coventry in the first half.

It was a contest between the Town's classy and thoughtful football and Coventry's battling determination,

with a crowd of nearly 15,000 getting behind the home team and turning the occasion into a kind of cup final atmosphere.

Having failed to put away their chances in the first half, the Town were pinned back by an all-action cavalry charge by Coventry in the second.

Feverish determination from fans and players alike gave Coventry the edge and seven minutes from time, after Les Sealey had made a couple of good saves, the stadium erupted with an electrifying discharge of emotion. A weak clearance by Steve Foster gave Brian Kilcline the chance to drive in the winner from 15 yards through a crowd of players.

Foster had played Cyrille Regis

out of the game, but the ex-England striker scored twice on Sunday against Everton as Coventry completed an unlikely third consecutive victory to avoid relegation and send Norwich down instead.

LUTON TOWN: Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas; Hill, Nicholas, Preece (Daniel, 75 mins); Stein, Harford, Nwajiahi.

COVENTRY: Ogrizovic; Butterworth, Kilcline, Peake, Pearce; Hibbitt (Gynn, 67 mins), McGrath, Bennett, Adams; Regis, Gibson.

THE GOAL: Brian Kilcline low drive, 83 minutes.

OTHER STRIKES: Town ten saved and five wide; Coventry nine saved and six off target. Corners: 11-4 to Coventry.

REFEREE: Brian Stevens, Stonehouse, Glos.

ATTENDANCE: 14,833.

ENTERTAINMENT: A cracking game, with the emotional tension on and off the pitch adding the extra spice.