

**LUTON 0
COVENTRY 1**

**By GRAHAM
PUNTER**

THE laws of the game were the talk of the Town after this blatantly unjust scoreline.

Coventry, outclassed in every department, relied on sheer hard work and a flagrant disregard of entertainment to deny Luton.

Forty yard back passes by players with other passing options and not under immediate pressure will do nothing to bring back the crowds.

Coventry boss Don Mackay agreed that back passes should be banned but while the tactic was permitted, it was there to be used.

"Being able to defend is an art," he said, justifying his side's performance.

Challenge

If this is modern art, then role on the renaissance.

The grim picture was little enhanced by referee John Moules who unnecessarily booked six players, five from Coventry and Luton's Mick Harford, for a challenge on keeper Ogrizovic.

Coventry won with a

They killed the game,

says Pleat

A DISAPPOINTED David Pleat gave a wry smile and said: "They pinched the result."

No-one was arguing, least of all Coventry manager Don Mackay.

The Luton boss allowed himself to become involved in the "pass-back" controversy that dominated the post-match analysis.

"It's fear that makes teams pass back and if they continue to live with fear they will be in trouble," he said.

"They did kill the game. It's very difficult to justify pass-backs because the crowd will not tolerate it."

But he said his own side were not good enough on the day to overcome

Coventry's stubborn resistance.

Mackay defended the pass-back tactics by saying his players didn't feel confident to turn with the ball on a pitch that was "foreign" to them.

With Coventry's recent record of defeats, no-one was going to win any praise for trying to play entertaining football and getting caught in possession.

"Luton played a lot of good football today but they won't get any thanks for it," he said.

freak 35th minute goal when a speculative 20-yard drive by Dave Bowman took a slight deflection and squirmed under Les Sealey's body.

But at the other end the Coventry goal led a charmed life, with Ogrizovic outstanding.

Twice in the first half the keeper risked rearranging his features with courageous dives at Nwajiobi's feet.

In the move of the match Foster found Preece, whose first time headed pass was collected by Stein. He forced a brilliant tip-over from Ogrizovic.

A similar save kept out a fierce curling drive from full-back Tim Breacker.

There was no let-up

after the break, with the keeper performing more heroics to keep out a Nicholas bullet.

Cleared

Harford's lofted shot drifted a fraction too high and then his header from Hill's cross was whacked off the line by Adams, the same player who cleared under his own crossbar from Stein in the last minute.

David Pleat fielded his A team, the wonderfully consistent side that beat Spurs a week earlier, and they were well in charge throughout without ever reaching their peak.

Towards the end there were unfamiliar hints of desperation, with high balls thumped into the

penalty area, a style foreign to Luton.

But on reflection Hatters did everything just about right without getting the luck. Nine times out of 10 this match would have ended in a win for Luton.

The fact it went the other way was just an example of how unpredictable and bewildering this game can be and why we don't win the pools every week.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas, Nicholas, Hill, Preece, Stein, Harford, Nwajiobi. Sub: Parker.
COVENTRY: Ogrizovic, Borrows, Rodger, Peake, Adams, Bennett, Bowman, Gynn, McGrath, Evans, Gibson. Sub: Downs.