



HAPPY HATTER. Luton's Brian Stein (arm raised) turns away in celebration after netting his second goal against Manchester City.

Stein machine

LUTON poured anti-freeze all over their plastic pitch to keep out the frost — and striker Brian Stein's goal machine fired first time to ignite the win that keeps them firmly in the First Division's top ten. Manchester City were caught cold from a David Preece free kick way out by their corner flag in only the second minute.

And Stein was off the mark in a flash to drive home his 12th goal of the season at the near post.

After that, City skidded around, trying to keep pace with Luton's sharp, one-touch football that was ideal on the lightning fast surface.

And although a late penalty by Mark Lillis briefly threatened to continue a mini-revival that had produced two wins in a row, they seldom got out of first gear.

By the time City found the target, the fleet-footed Stein might have had four or five goals, but he had to settle for just two, the second following another Preece free-kick in the 64th minute.

In fact, that goal by Stein seemed more than a little unlucky for City. Full-back Nicky Reid appeared to be fouled in the confusion caused by a far post header by Paul Elliott which led to Stein bundling the ball in.

Despite a furious finish

by **WILLIAM PIERCE**
Luton 2 Man City 1

inspired by the Lillis penalty seven minutes from time for a trip by Tim Breacker on Paul Power. City couldn't complain about the justice of the result.

The fog that closed in during the second half, appeared to be their only chance of saving the game.

Their best opening came just after Stein had put Luton ahead but City midfielder Clive Wilson, later to go to hospital with concussion, jabbed casually at a close-range chance from a Gordon Davies cross and allowed 'keeper Les Sealey to claw the ball away.

Astute

Despite that miss, Wilson had looked the major weapon for City with some astute passing from midfield and after his departure four minutes from half-time, Luton's Ricky Hill and Preece had even more room to run the game.

Luton, confident and cocksure of their footing on the slippery surface, spread the ball around delightfully and Stein was just off-target with two more shots before setting up a chance for full-back Mitchell Thomas which 'keeper Eric Nixon smartly turned over the bar.

Big Mick Harford also missed with a header when another goal looked certain.

Wilson was detained for observation after being stretchered off, and Luton's Emeka Nwajobi also had to go to hospital for X-rays after injuring a foot.

Deserved

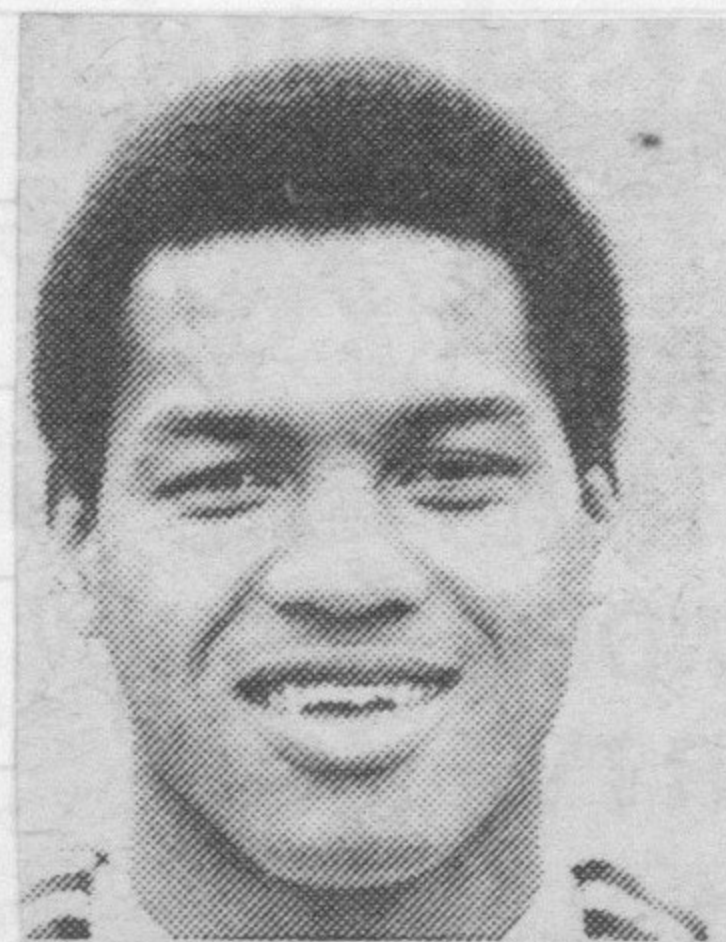
Luton boss David Pleat said: "Stein deserved his two goals and could have had a few more. He was sharp and alert and there was a period in the game when we played football every bit as good as that which brought us seven goals against Southampton."

"I was pleased with Paul Elliott's contribution. He had to come in because we dare not risk Steve Foster's hamstring injury."

"Elliott will speak to Aston Villa manager Graham Turner tomorrow and has a tricky decision to make. It will be interesting to see what he does."

Villa have bid £400,000 for Elliott in a bid to shore up their defence.

LUTON.—Sealey, Breacker, Thomas, Nicholas, Elliott, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, Nwajobi, Preece. Sub: Daniel.
MAN CITY.—Nixon: Reid, Power, Johnson, McCarthy, Phillips, Lillis, May, Davies, McNab, Wilson. Sub: Baker.



● **Brian Stein**