

MAGIC MICKY

Micky Mellon claimed his first League goal of the season to put Albion back on level terms against fellow strugglers Luton at the Hawthorns.

Keith Burkinshaw's men had dominated the first half, with Paul Raven, Bob Taylor and Simon Garner all going close — only to fall behind to a 36th minute David Preece goal.

But although the home side were not quite so dominant after the interval, they finally made a breakthrough when Stacy Coldicott set up Mellon for a 69th minute equaliser.

ALBION: Lange; Burgess, Lilwall, Mardon, Raven, Ashcroft, Garner, Coldicott, Taylor, Mellon, Hamilton. Subs: Hunter, Fereday, Naylor (GK).

LUTON: Sommer; Linton, Thomas, Houghton, Peake, Dreyer, Telfer, Harper, Dixon, Hughes, Preece. Subs: Dickov, James, Petterson (GK).

Referee: Mr K Breen (Liverpool).

Albion made a lively start, and when Burgess picked out Taylor with a long through ball the striker surged into the Luton area, only to be overpowered by Lin-

ton.

As Albion maintained their early momentum, Mardon joined in the next attack and was unlucky to see a well-struck angled drive held at the near post by Sommer.

Luton's keeper needed treatment after making his next contribution. He collected a long through ball but was caught on the knee as Ashcroft followed through in an attempt to unsettle him.

It was a reckless action by the Albion midfielder, who was booked for his trouble.

When Albion won a corner in the 13th minute it led to a sustained spell of pressure which could have seen them score twice in the space of 60 seconds.

Hamilton's flag-kick was flicked on by Burgess to Raven, whose powerful downward header was kicked off the line by Hughes.

When the ball was knocked back to the danger-zone Taylor's close-range header was kicked over at full

93/94 Rob Bishop SPORTS ARGUS MATCH ACTION



Albion.....1
Luton.....1

stretch by Sommer, and after Luton had only partially cleared the resultant flag kick, Burgess shot narrowly over just inside the box.

It was still very much one-way traffic, with Luton mounting only the occasional raid into Albion's half, and the home side went close again on 32 minutes.

Ashcroft cleverly worked his way past Thomas before delivering a low cross and when the ball was only partially cleared, Lilwall played it neatly into Garner's path.

The veteran striker let fly with a low shot on the turn from 15

yards which Sommer did well to get away with his feet.

Luton had not managed a single shot so far but amazingly, they took the lead with their first effort after 36 minutes.

Even then, it was not a constructive move which led to the goal, but a piece of slack defending by Mardon, who was dispossessed on the edge of the area by PREECE when there appeared to be little threat.

The former Walsall player, hardly able to believe his luck, took a couple of strides forward before placing a

low left foot shot beyond Lange and into the far corner.

Half-time
Albion.....0
Luton.....1
Mellon tried to get Albion moving after the break with an astute pass down the right for Ashcroft to chase. Luton were momentarily in disarray as the winger surged forward, but the alert Peake spotted the danger and was across sharply to make a timely intervention.

But Albion, pushing forward in search of an equaliser, were still vulnerable to Luton's occasional attacks, and Hughes nearly caught them napping when he surged through the centre to drive wide from the edge of the box.

One of the visitors' more constructive moves saw them go close to a second goal in the 57th minute.

Thomas exchanged passes with Hughes before delivering a fine centre which Lilwall did well to head away for a corner as Telfer

challenged.

Albion made the first substitution on 59 minutes with Fereday replacing Ashcroft.

And within seconds, Mardon thought he had equalised when he headed in a left-wing centre although a linesman was already flagging for off-side.

In the 60th minute Luton also made a switch, sending on Dickov for Houghton.

Luton were looking increasingly confident on the break but just when Albion appeared to be running out of ideas, they conjured up a neat move which produced a 69th minute equaliser.

Coldicott played the ball smartly into MEL-LON'S path and the midfielder man picked his spot with a low angled drive beyond the advancing Sommer and into the far corner.

Albin nearly had a second when Raven got on the end of Fereday's free-kick to head just wide in the 75th minute.

In the 87th minute, Mardon was booked for a late tackle on Dikov.