

BRAVO, LUTON!

Victory Merited In Thrilling F.A. Cup Replay

By VULCAN

Blackpool 1 Luton Town 2

THIS Cup replay at Bloomfield Road was a real thriller and the result a rare turn-up, as they say. Yet, unexpected though Luton's victory may have been, it was gained on merit. Once they had secured the lead they hung on to it like grim death.

You would have a job to beat that last quarter of an hour for excitement. With Luton leading 2-1 and all the local "fans" shouting their heads off for at least an equaliser, Blackpool stormed the Luton lines for the last ten minutes in one long assault. They failed, partly through ill-luck, but

REVISED FOURTH ROUND TIES

Luton v. Sunderland

Swansea v. York

Bolton v. Norwich

Manchester City v.
Accrington

chiefly because of Luton's great resistance.

All those frantic final efforts should not have been necessary. Before and after Finan scored in the ninth minute, Blackpool squandered the gifts bestowed upon them and showed a poverty of finishing-work surprising in any side, let alone a team on the fringe of the First Division.

THE COLUMNAL NELSON

So much for Blackpool's lapses. Now let us praise Luton for a victory wrested from powerful foes and with the odds against them. Sloan and Roberts scored their goals, one in each half, and if the Blackpool inside wing men had been of the same calibre the result would have been vastly different.

Having wiped off their arrears and then got their noses in front, Luton staged a great display of magnificent defensive work. Dolman, the goalkeeper, was especially good, despite the fact that the Blackpool forwards made his task easier, and one or two of his saves were really brilliant.

Mackey and Smith, destructive first-time tackling backs, protected him in grand style, and Nelson, whose special mission seemed to be to "sit upon" Finan, covered himself with glory. It was a good job that this lanky centre-half kept so tight a hold on Blackpool's young Scottish leader, for Finan was the only one who consistently looked like getting goals.

Finlayson and Fellows, busy as can be in checking Blackpool raids, did fine work, too, and the forwards, especially Hodge and Sloan, were a menacing line.

Hodge and Sloan comprised Luton's re-formed right wing and the inside man, his head slightly injured after about 20 minutes' play, was absent for six minutes, returning just in time to score the goal that wiped out Blackpool's early lead. They formed the best attacking unit on the field and Wallace did well in a late Luton rally to save two rasping shots by Hodge.

I did not see a lot of "ten goals Payne"—he was mostly under the dominance of Cardwell—but Roberts was a splendid worker and Stephenson, a wanderer of the Eric Brook type, tried hard, though his skill was not equal to his enthusiasm.

Man for man, Blackpool never looked as good as the eager Luton fellows, nor were they equal to their rivals as a team. There was little or no combined constructive skill about their approach play, and their defence wilted in moments of stress. Finan took his goal beautifully, moving quickly forward with a pass from Tom Jones, flicking the ball cleverly past Nelson and crashing it home with a fine shot from short range as Dolman advanced to meet him.

ROBERTS'S WINNER

Hill, the old Arsenal man, did not disgrace himself, but the other wing was most disappointing. Hampson, who displaced Middleton at the last moment, was ponderous in his movements, and on the only occasion when he really threatened to score, his wing partner swooped down, took the ball from his toes and blinded it over the bar. Witham nearly made Luton's total three, Roberts heading just wide from a corner after the full-back had narrowly escaped beating his own goalkeeper.

Blackpool started off well enough and led Luton a merry dance for the first half hour. So superior were they in football skill that when Finan scored it seemed just a question of how many.

Whether they became too confident or not I cannot say, but their play fell away from that point and they were toiling all the while after Sloan had levelled the scores.

Roberts crossed the ball from the left wing and Payne missed it, but Sloan dashed up to shoot swiftly past Wallace. It looked as if he might have been off-side, but the referee was well placed to see and, anyway, it is asking for trouble to stop dead, as the Blackpool players did, before the whistle is blown.

They crossed over level and Roberts scored the winning goal half an hour from the end with a close-range shot from Hodge's forward pass. Stephenson ran up to finish the job off, but the ball had crossed the line before he touched it.

Blackpool: Wallace; Blair, Witham; Farrow, Cardwell, Jones (S); Watmough, Hampson, Finan, Jones (T W), Hill.

Luton Town: Dolman; Mackey, Smith; Finlayson, Nelson, Fellows; Hodge, Sloan, Payne, Roberts, Stephenson.