

Payne's Amazing Last-Minute Miss Against Sunderland

By CRUSADER

Luton 2 Sunderland 2

It has often been said that to win the Cup a team must be favoured with a certain amount of luck. At Luton, Sunderland certainly had a generous helping, and were extremely fortunate to force a draw. After being two goals in arrears at the halfway stage, they were level in the first 20 minutes of the second period. Rain came to their assistance by softening the pitch. For previously, on the frozen turf, the visitors could not keep their feet so well as the Luton players, but at no stage of the game were they allowed to get into their stride.

On the other hand, the Third Division side adapted their play admirably to the conditions, and their aggressiveness in the first half kept the Sunderland defence at full stretch. With the Luton forwards playing well up in line the visitors' halves and backs were forced to make hurried clearances, with the result that the ball frequently went to an opponent.

Strangely enough Payne missed two glorious chances of putting his side in the fifth round—both in the second half. Before Sunderland had scored Payne received the ball clear of Johnson, but after tricking Gorman he shot straight at Mapson.

Again, in the last minute, Hodge raced away on the right and centred across the Sunderland goal. With Mapson on the ground the ball came to Payne off Gorman's foot, but the centre-forward, who stood unmarked less than five yards out, shot wide.

Another escape for Sunderland occurred in the first half when Hodge received a cross from Stephenson close in. Apparently under the impression that he was offside, the winger merely tapped the ball to Mapson.

LUTON RELAXED THEIR GRIP

Luton took the lead 24 minutes after the start when Hodge swung the ball over to Roberts, who netted with a low drive. Five minutes later Roberts put the home side two up when he accepted flick from Payne. Sunderland protested against this award, but after consulting a linesman the referee allowed the point to count.

It was not until the final minute of the opening half that Sunderland made their first concerted movement.

Up to this point the Luton goalkeeper had remained practically untroubled, for Sunderland had been completely outplayed by the Third Division side, who were quicker on the ball and adopted go-ahead tactics with marked success.

If Luton had continued in this aggressive strain after the interval they would surely have won, but early in the second half they relaxed sufficiently to enable the Sunderland halves to give their forwards more support.

So for a short time we had a glimpse of the real Sunderland. Seven minutes after the restart Carter drew the Luton defence out of position and swept the ball over to Connor, whose carefully-calculated shot found the net between Dolman and the near post. Five minutes later Sunderland drew level. From a difficult angle Connor tried a shot—a simple affair—which Dolman misfielded. The ball rebounded to Duns, who made no mistake.

GURNEY HELD UP

Mackey, Nelson and Smith were grand in the Luton defence. Unerring in their tackling and kicking strongly, they held the Sunderland attack in an iron grip. Gurney could never get the better of Nelson, whose advantage in height enabled him always to beat the visitors' leader in the air. Finlayson and Fellowes, too, did notable work.

In attack, Roberts and Sloan were keen foragers, while Payne was a lively leader. Stephenson was the most accomplished winger afield and gave Gorman a harassing time.

Mapson was the only member of the Sunderland team who revealed his normal form. Little was seen of Carter or Gallacher, while the wing-halves were too busy in assisting their backs to be able to help in attack.

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

Sunderland: Mapson; Gorman, Hall; Thomson, Johnston. McNab; Duns, Carter, Gurney, Gallacher, Connor