

SUNDERLAND ROUTED BY LUTON TOWN

From a Special Correspondent

55/56

Luton Town 8, Sunderland 2

Luton Town beat Sunderland 8-2 in a game of football which must have pleased every spectator. Though the scoring of the goals provided the chief excitement, there was also present that blend of football which is peculiarly English in its skill, pace, strength, and physical clash, played on that characteristically British winter mud which is the native platform of the ball player.

The score does not reflect the footballing excellence which came from Sunderland, whose players always looked eleven gifted individualists even though they were overwhelmed by the team work of an outstandingly fit and fast Luton side. There was nothing of the generosity of a crowd whose favourites are winning in the applause the Luton spectators gave the visiting team before a goal was scored. Fraser made a wonderful reflex lunge in kicking out Adam's downward header and handled perfectly at close range a shot from Turner. McDonald at back showed a skill in footwork which some esteemed contemporary inside forwards lack and Aitken, Daniel, and Anderson at half-back were polished as well as diligent. The Sunderland forwards seemed to regard themselves as a separate unit, relieved of any responsibilities towards their defence. Bingham, too, was swept out of the game by Aherne. On the other hand, Chisholm contrived some ingenious positions from which he tried well for goal, Purdon was hard working and mobile, and Shackleton added point to his trickery with some shots which demanded good saves of Baynham although they were delivered from too far out to hold much promise of defeating him.

A quarter of an hour before half-time, Fraser impeded Cullen and incurred a penalty kick from which Turner scored. Then Cullen crossed the field to the inside-left position and ran on to a half-volley with such perfect timing that from 25 yards' range his shot rose splendidly

into the far top corner of the goal. The Luton forwards from the intelligent promptings of Shanks and Cummins now raced over the mud like whippets and employed the single twist or swerve which on the wet surface, took them past one opponent before they sent the ball swiftly into the gap they had created. So Adam moved in and swung Turner's low cross field pass past Fraser and Morton ran through and scored Luton's fourth goal a minute before the interval.

There were many of the subtler skills to admire in Sunderland's football. But their defenders played as individuals, as if they hesitated to offer one another the implied criticism of cover. So that when Daniel made an injudicious pass back to Fraser, who slipped, Morton had the time and space to score. Sunderland now attacked in earnest for ten minutes with a variety of method which showed Baynham to be a gifted goalkeeper and the Luton defence surrounding Owen to be cool, resolute, and constructive, however heavy the pressure upon it. So the ball was sent again to the Sunderland goalmouth where it was handled and Turner scored from a second penalty.

Now the Luton defenders could afford to challenge comparison with those of Sunderland in delicate ball-play before their own goal until they allowed Chisholm to offer Purdon a gentle volley to kick past Baynham. A goal from close-quarter by Cullen came after Sunderland had thrown three or four Luton attacks offside by only the narrowest of margins, and then Morton ran half the length of the field, Daniel at his elbow, before shooting confidently past Fraser.

As Purdon scored his second goal darkness settled on the end of the match. Shortly afterwards some twenty-five thousand crammed spectators eased their breathing and walked home under the yellow lights, richly satisfied by two points ten goals, and an hour and a half of fast excitement.

J.

LUTON TOWN.—Baynham; Dunne, Aherne, Pemberton, Owen, Shanks; Cullen, Turner, Morton, Cummins, Adam.

SUNDERLAND.—Fraser; Hedley, McDonald, Anderson, Daniel, Aitken; Bingham, Fleming, Purdon, Chisholm, Shackleton.