



Winger Billy Bingham
rams Luton's second goal into
an empty net at Kenilworth-
road as Sunderland 'keeper
Peter Wakeman misses his
dive to intercept the pass.

LIVELY LUTON CAN REACH THE TOP

Luton 3 Sunderland 3: by GRAHAM BUXTON

DESPITE Luton's three goals there are still weaknesses in the attack. There was plenty of ability in midfield, but not the cool thinking and precision in front of goal to make it pay off.

In the end they were lucky to rescue a point from a game which they should have won with a comfortable margin to spare. Only two minutes remained when Joe McBride triumphantly rammed in a corner from Billy Bingham for the equaliser.

Although Sunderland were often outplayed, especially in the second half, there was admiration for the method, application and fighting spirit of this comparatively young side.

In trying to rebuild past glories at Roker Park, Sunderland have obviously chosen wisely in achieving a blend of youth and experience.

Youngsters like full backs Colin Nelson and Len Ashurst came through what must have been a searching test with flying colours. After all, they were facing two vastly experienced wingers in Billy Bingham and Stuart Imlach.

This was especially so with Nelson, against whom Imlach scarcely had a look in.

Bingham was more of a menace because he went in search of the ball, but this tended to unbalance the Luton attack.

The slowness of John Groves often irritated the crowd, and with Gordon Turner not finding the openings Luton were comparatively weak at inside forward.

Three goals in 16 minutes gave

this game a flying start with Dave Pacey starting it. Jimmy McNab quickly scored from left half. Bingham made it 2-1, then Ian Lawther, a strong bustling leader, equalised when Luton were threatening to run riot.

Until 20 minutes of the second half had gone Sunderland seemed to be fighting a losing battle, so heavy was the Luton pressure. Aided by daring saves by Peter Wakeham and strong play by Charlie Hurley, Sunderland survived and caused a near sensation when they broke away to take the lead.

Alan O'Neill beat Brown in a race for a through pass and Ron Baynham made his second serious and costly error of the match by advancing to the edge of the penalty area. That left him a spectator of O'Neill's lob into the roof of the empty net.

So Sunderland looked like taking two fortunate points until the exciting closing stages when McBride's first goal of the season saved Luton.

Both these teams could be among the top in the Second Division if they can improve at inside forward. Occasional passes made by Ernie Taylor were scarcely a sufficient contribution and O'Neill's goal was the best thing he did.