

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

FALSE IMPRESSION GIVEN BY RESULT

The Town Were Worthy Of A Second Chance

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 0, SUNDERLAND 3

"Three smash-and-grab goals in the last 12 minutes when Luton's stamina began to ebb made sure that Sunderland would be in the hat for the Fourth Round draw in London tomorrow."

"But they would be the first to doff their bowlers to the 'Hatters.' Luton, with some razor-sharp tackling, slick moves and sheer tenacity had given the Sunderland defence a rough time."—"The People."

"Luton so nearly wrote another glorious page in their history. They deserved at least a replay of their tie with Sunderland on the way the game went. For 78 minutes they gave as good as they received, and sometimes a little better, against a team who had more skill but carried little thrust in front of goal."

"Manager George Hardwick's instructions were for Sunderland to contain Luton, and then try to break out from defence to snatch the lead. His biggest worry was that rain might stop, leaving the pitch a sticky morass which would have handicapped his lightweight forwards, but the elements were with him."—"Sunday Express."

"This was a match in which the first goal was liable to be decisive, but no-one expected Luton's defence to be pricked like a balloon when it finally came."

"Sunderland paced it cleverly. They set to contain Luton in the early stages and then gradually wore them down with devastating effect."—"News of the World."

"For the best part of an hour it looked as if Luton might still be the bogey team to Sunderland of their First Division days. And with only 13 minutes to go it was odds on a replay."

"Yet the three-goal blitz they scarcely deserved to suffer was, in a way, of Luton's making. For Sunderland at last decided to abandon close passing in the mud and follow Luton's lead of workmanlike straight-for-goal methods."—"Sunday Mirror."

IF ever a score conveyed an entirely false impression of the way in which a game went, this was it. There were never three goals between these teams and a draw would have been the most fair result.

So finely balanced was the play that either side could have won by the only goal and no one would have been able to complain and the least the Town deserved was to have the chance to play again.

That a second meeting would be necessary began to look more and more certain as the closing stages of this muddy battle began to unfold.

It seemed that stalemate had been reached, with the Town always having given as good as they received and being a little unlucky not to turn their slight territorial advantage into a narrow lead.

For what happened in the last 12 minutes, no-one was prepared on the evidence of what had gone before. With Sunderland having been just saved by a fine clearance by McLaughlan from Riddick, they suddenly swept away.

Herd picked up a loose ball in midfield and flashed it out to Usher, who was unmarked. On went the winger before letting go a low centre that SHARKEY fastened on to eagerly to give Sunderland the belated, but absolutely vital first goal.

LAST CHANCE OF GLORY

With all the ferocity at their command, the Town hit back, and in the next minute McLaughlan had to dive at the feet of Rioch, after McKechnie had pushed the ball through, but that was to be the Town's last chance of glory and a lucrative replay.

Five minutes from the end, MULHALL took a pass from Herd to weave a way through before beating Baynham from close in, and to rub salt into the Town's wounds, SHARKEY snatched another goal with two minutes remaining.

That the Town deserved better was of small consolation to them after the tremendous fight they put up and the determined way in which they approached their task, must have regained them some of their lost friends.

Certainly, the fact that nearly 17,000 turned up in pouring rain, emphasises that there is still a football public in Luton, even though the gate was bolstered by a big and highly vocal contingent from Sunderland.

In this fast, exciting struggle, clear-cut chances were few and far between, but Jardine and McKechnie each had one in the first half, only to be foiled by McLaughlan, who was kept busier than was Baynham.

Usher missed the best one for Sunderland when he failed to meet a fast-moving cross from Mulhall and the game had "goalless draw" written all over it until those final, dramatic minutes.

NEEDED MORE PENETRATION

Could the Town have found a little more penetration in attack, their interest in the Cup would still exist, but this has been one of their failings this season and the hard-working McKechnie found difficulty in shaking off the attentions of Rooks, though he never stopped trying to force a way through.

However, he had to carry too much of a burden because neither Riddick nor Rioch was consistent and the Town badly needed someone with real drive in one of the inside-forward positions.

Best of the forwards was Pleat, who worried Ashurst continually, and there might have been more concentration on this flank, even though the dogged Jardine always took a great deal of stopping.

Strength of the Town was contained in the middle line, where Pacey played an outstanding part, though Caleb, having one of his best games,

was little behind, and Reid fitted well into the scheme of things.

Unfortunately, after a first half in which he confirmed the good impression he had made, Barton lost touch with his winger, began to adopt retreating tactics, and it was from this quarter that the first vital blow emanated.

For McBain there was a worrying, harassing afternoon against Mulhall, with whom he never really got to grips, though he is a long way from being the first full-back to be tormented by this fine winger.

Until those closing stages, there was no real threat that Baynham would be beaten, and his handling of the greasy ball was good.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Barton; Pacey, Caleb, Reid; Pleat, Riddick, McKechnie, Rioch, Jardine.

SUNDERLAND: McLaughlan; Parke, Ashurst; Harvey, Rooks, McNab; Usher, Mit-chinson, Sharkey, Herd, Mulhall.

Referee: K. E. Walker, Blackpool. Attendance, 16,834. Receipts, £3,660.