

THE END OF LUTON'S LEAGUE CUP ROAD



Laurie Sheffield leaps high in a vain effort to connect with a corner during one of Luton's rare moments of menace at Bramall Lane last night

UNITED GIVE TOWN A SHARP LESSON

69/70 (FLC)

LUTON TOWN were given a lesson last night — a taste of what it's like in the class of football they are aiming at — when they were run off their feet by a sizzling second-half display of super soccer by the young blades of Sheffield United.

And United were made to look better than they were by a below-par display by the Town who crumpled after giving as good as they got for half an hour.

United were fast and skilful. Their soccer know-how and running off the ball was a delight to watch, and their officials were surprised that there were fewer than 17,000 people there to watch it.

Problem

Luton's problem was their system. They played 4-4-2, with Tees and Macdonald as front runners and the rest banging the ball up to them. It was hopeless. However willing the Luton strikers, they were to get nowhere against the six-man solidarity of the Sheffield defence.

Only French starred in the Town attack, but his centres were nearly always won by the United defence.

There will be all sorts of talk about Luton being relieved to be out of the competition and that they can now concentrate on their championship bid, but nobody will persuade me that

Sheffield United 3,
Luton Town 0

By
ROGER DUCKWORTH

they would not have loved to have been in the draw for the last 16.

There were several disappointing performances from Luton and centre-half Terry Branston, standing in for Chris Nicholl, will want to forget this one. He seemed to lack his usual power and command of the situation; his tackling and timing looked all wrong.

And in front of him midfield general Mike Keen was not his usual self, often leaving gaps which were quickly exploited by eager Sheffield.

John Collins also faded. He began as brightly as stainless steel but then never seemed to be at home in his position, somewhere in the right half region, from where he was expected to operate.

But for 25 minutes there was nothing in it. Macdonald produced the first shot of the match after some good work by Tees, but it was caught by former England goalkeeper Alan Hodgkinson, who did well to gather a good shot from Collins a few minutes later.

French began to move well and full back Badger would have needed to be a ferret to catch him on this showing. Luton won the early appreciation of the crowd with some bright football and one chap in the stand expressed his surprise when he

said of the Third Division side: "By gum, they're real gallopers."

But, sad to say, gallop is all they did. The beginning of the end came after 28 minutes when Alan Woodward hurtled through the Luton defence in pursuit of a through ball from Staniforth and beat Sandy Davie all ends up with a splendid shot.

The goal stemmed from a mis-tackle by Keen, and Bannister missed his late tackle on the nippy Woodward.

United had no further reward to show at half time but the Luton flair was tarnished by then. Max Dougan and Collins both lacked direction at times with their passing but both were doing well in their own particular fields — tackling and running.

Luton's best players on the night were Alan Slough, Keith Allen and goalkeeper Sandy Davie who, it should be pointed out, had no earthly chance with any of the goals that were hammered home with real venom.

Although his man scored two goals and twice went close I thought Jack Bannister had a fair match at left back. He forced Woodward away from his favourite touch-line and the winger had to operate from midfield to score his goals.

Step behind

The second came nine minutes after the interval. Reece sent Woodward off on a glittering cross-field run. French gave chase but was always a step behind, and the United winger thumped in a peach of a goal.

Tees was pulled off in the 64th minute and Laurie Sheffield given a run. He immediately went close, hitting the side-netting after a piece of good work by Bannister. A few minutes later Sheffield

everything

24A GUILD FORD STREET, LUTON
Tel: Luton 23540

Self Drive Hire
Low Rates
BUDGET RENT A CAR
Comprehensive insurance
Free RAC membership
Unlimited passenger liability
Newest cars
Hire from the people you know
Bedford 51008
Murkett Bros

hire
of 18
SELF DRIVE Car hire, 1969 models