

Unbeaten record hits the dust!

LUTON FADE AS OWN GOAL SETS ROT

11-10-6
2914

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Doncaster 2

Luton Town 0

IT HAD to come. The Hatters suffered their first League defeat of the season when they were beaten 2-0 at Doncaster this afternoon.

Yet another own goal, this time by Slough, set Luton on the path to defeat, and a second-half effort from Briggs sealed their fate.

After a foggy train journey north, Luton were unchanged for what was considered their toughest away match of the season.

Alan Slough passed a fitness test at 8.15am at Kenilworth Road, and the team and officials set off north on the official train laid on for the Luton fans. There was something in the region of 350 supporters on the train.

Others travelled north by coach and car and before the kick-off it was evident that Luton had a good following in the big crowd.

Broken teeth

Town right-back Fred Jardine was playing with a couple of broken teeth — the legacy of a kick on the jaw in the midweek match against Bournemouth. He faces a trip to the dentist on Monday.

Doncaster, who are doing well at home, were unchanged from the side that beat Mansfield 2-1 during the week. And only centre-forward Briggs, a replacement for Rabjohn, made the side any different from that which drew 1-1 at Fulham last week.

Luton's substitute was Laurie Sheffield, who still lives in Doncaster.

Over lunch on the train, Luton manager Alec Stock made it clear that his side was going to continue their policy of going all-out 'not to lose'. He said the Town would be playing 4-4-2.

Luton do not have much to worry about on this score, for they have one of the best away records in the League and have won all but one of their trips from home this season.

Split

The Doncaster pitch is one of the biggest in the League, and right from the start the home half backs showed their intention of using their accustomed open space. Flowers split the Luton defence with a grand cross-field pass to the left, but Usher was just not quick enough to reach it.

As the sides weighed each other up Slough beat Briggs in a long race back for a loose ball before finding touch.

Only three minutes after the start Luton right winger John Collins tried a long high shot at goal and almost surprised goalkeeper Ogston, who parried the ball down before getting control of it.

Doncaster came straight back and Usher had a similar speculative attempt at the Luton goal, but it went just wide of the left-hand post.

A bigger-than-normal crowd was appreciative of the good football both sides were serving up in the early stages. Some of Doncaster's midfield work looked very good, and Allen found himself with plenty to do.

Applauded

Rovers played some clever stuff out on the right, and after a quick throw-in Bannister was injured following a tackle on Briggs who was just about to centre.

The centre forward in fact, got the ball across and Sandy Davie raced well out of his goal to gather the ball and clear.

The sporting Yorkshire fans

applauded Bannister when he recovered from his knock. This is the sort of thing that puts a good complexion on matches that can so easily turn the other way.

Both sides were getting their opportunities. Macdonald just got the wrong end of an offside decision for Luton when in a good position, and then Briggs went close for Doncaster following a throw in on the left by Usher.

Luton were full of running, and in the 13th minute Tees had bad luck when he side-stepped full back Robertson before pulling a good save out of Ogston.

Danger

Rovers came straight back, and a long ball from the left tested Davie. The goalkeeper chose to fist it clear, and as has happened before put the side in danger. The ball ran clear to

TEAMS	
DONCASTER	ROVERS:
Ogston; Wilcockson, Gray; Flowers, Robertson, Haselden; Watson, Regan, Briggs, Johnson, Usher. Sub: Rabjohn.	
LUTON	TOWN:
Jardine, Bannister; Keen, Nicholl, Slough; Collins, Macdonald, Tees, Allen, French. Sub: Sheffield.	
Referee: Mr S. J. Kayley (Preston).	
GOALS	
SLOUGH, own goal (DONCASTER) 33 min.	
BRIGGS (Doncaster) 48 min	
Attendance:	17,380

Haselden, who hit it narrowly over the top after being given all the time in the world in which to move.

Accent on the exciting start was given when a Bannister free kick into the box beat Ogston, but Macdonald could not quite reach the stray ball and Gray found touch.

Bannister was still limping from his earlier knock and Slough, himself not 100 per cent fit, gave him coverage when the pressure built up on the left.

The thrills continued when a long floating centre from Allen was well-gathered by Ogston right off Tees' head, who jumped a surprising height.

The pressure was really switching about. From a throw on the right Flowers got a good cross in for Doncaster and Keen headed safely over his own bar. The corner caused a bit of trouble and it was left to Slough to sort the job out with a hefty clearance.

Trouble

Doncaster switched wingers and Usher, obviously a bit of a flyer, slipped over to the right to try to exploit Bannister, who was having some trouble from his injury.

It almost immediately worked when a cross from Usher produced a hard shot from Briggs, but the centre-forward was penalised for handling.

Doncaster were justifying

their high position in the League with some intelligent attacking play.

Their attack was blending well with the midfield men, and Nicholl was called to put in some defensive work for Luton which underlined his strength both in the air and on the ground.

After 33 minutes Doncaster went ahead through an own goal.

It followed a cross from the right, and as Davie came out to cover, the ball struck SLOUGH'S head and lobbed over Davie.

From the kick off Luton went back into the hunt, and a French centre was headed inches over the bar by Tees, who had made 20 yards in a dash to retaliate.

Attacked

Their goal had really put Doncaster's back up. They attacked from every point of the compass and Davie again found himself in the back of the net, this time without the ball, after fisting a centre over the bar.

Doncaster continued to enjoy a purple patch and Regan darted through the ranks of the Luton defence to test Davie.

Luton's plight was not helped by the fact that Bannister was really limping badly by this time, and Luton trainer Reg Game was in close attendance on the touchline, running up and down in participation of the full-back faltering.

HT: Doncaster 1, Luton 0

It was surprising to see Bannister reappear after the trouble he appeared to be in at the end of the first half.

Luton immediately won a corner off Robertson. French floated it across and Tees rose high above the defence to flash a header towards goal. It had beaten Ogston all ends up but full-back Gray appeared on the line to head the effort away.

But Luton's ambitions were short lived. Doncaster built up an attack in midfield and right-winger Watson pushed the ball to BRIGGS.

The centre-forward kneeled back to the winger, made ground through the Luton defence and then launched himself feet first at the accurate return to put it into the net, off the left-hand post, for Doncaster's second goal.

It was a splendid move by the home side and fully deserved a goal.

Bannister off

Before the teams could kick off again Alec Stock appeared on the touchline and signalled for Jack Bannister to come off. He was replaced by Laurie Sheffield.

Malcolm Macdonald, who had plenty of defensive experience at Fulham, slotted into the left back position in place of Bannister, while Sheffield led the attack.

Graham French won a corner on the left after a determined run, and while the half-time scores were being read over he shoved a deep flag kick back to Macdonald, who wasted the chance of catching Doncaster unawares by lifting the ball high over the top.

Sheffield was working hard and French tried a surprise shot. But the Luton effort did not look convincing enough to knock the powerful Doncaster side off its balance.

A long ball down the middle upset Robertson and Sheffield nipped past him to find only Ogston between him and the net.

He picked his spot and thumped the ball with his left foot but his shot hammered into the concrete wall after whistling past the left-hand post.

Bad passing

Nicholl was still playing solidly in the middle of Luton's defence but in midfield Keen often suffered with some bad passing.

In the 66th minute Slough had a bit of bad luck. He collected a return from Keen and just as he was about to shape up to shoot he found the referee in his way.

In the 66th minute Doncaster's Regan was unlucky to be given offside when Watson put him clear of the Luton defence.

French got the better of Wilcockson and won another corner. He put this across himself from the left and really caught the Rovers defence napping.

His kick passed across the face of the goal and as Town powered in Haselden was left injured in the back of the net. The ball carried on into touch on the other side of the field.

Foiled

In the 73rd minute Usher cut in from the left and his shot at goal produced a super-human effort from Davie, who touched the ball over for a corner.

Allen was working like a trojan for the Town, and after he had swung a cross a centre Tees was lifted at the last minute by Ogston.

As things swung back in Doncaster's favour Davie was hurt again punching away a high cross from the right, but he was able to resume after brief tending.

French almost sparked a late Luton revival when he beat Gray and shoved the ball through for Tees to chase, but the Luton centre-forward was just beaten to the ball by Ogston.