

Blackout, blizzard, but Town march on

LUTON TOWN 1 FULHAM 0

By Roger Duckworth

69/70

IN A BLIZZARD and a blackout, Luton Town collected two more points at Kenilworth Road last night when they beat both the conditions and Fulham to re-establish their two-point lead at the top of the Third Division.

With the floodlights going out four times and a blinding snowstorm making regular appearances

but Luton just about had the best of things, and deserved their win. But Fulham also showed what they can do, and even the weather did not obliterate some of their sparkling moves.

Congratulations must go to referee Harry Ellis who refused to abandon the proceedings, even when called over by a linesman who pointed out that he could not see the touch lines.

Mac scores

A late team change by manager Alec Stock gave Malcolm Macdonald a place, and he was rewarded for a hard-working display by scoring the only goal of the match against the club who sold him to Luton for £17,500 at the beginning of the season.

It came two minutes after the interval and, as usual, it was French who laid it on with a neat chip into the goalmouth. Macdonald took the ball well on his left foot, turned a tight semi-circle and, as Fulham were slow to challenge, was given the chance to sweep the ball past Seymour.

A curtain of darkness came down on the show before the first act had even started. As the players were having their pre-match kick-about the lights went out. They left the field, until the lights came on again. The match began, but after three minutes, blackout descended again.

Off trooped the players — except for Davie and Ryan, who entertained the crowd with a private game of passing. There was a 10-minute delay and a call for the electrician before things were back to normal.

Back came the players, but 12 minutes later out went the lights again. And on... and off... and on... and off. They finally stuttered back to life. And from then on stayed on.

Tenacity

Before this fade-out, which, incidentally, the crowd thoroughly enjoyed, Luton could have scored twice. In the seventh minute of play Tees was sent away on his own by Macdonald, but Seymour ran out to narrow the angle and blocked Tees' shot. Then, six minutes later, Macdonald had a shot cleared off the line.

After 22 minutes it was Fulham's turn, and the flying Jimmy Conway, the Third Division's leading scorer, showed all his class and tenacity. He slipped past Bannister, made Nicholl miss a full-speed tackle, ran round Davie and shot at goal. But Ryan, who had a splendid match, raced in to clear off the goal line.

Stan Horne was booked in the first half for flattening Harrison, but this was the only indiscretion on a night on which many could have been understood.

Conway and Earle worked well in the front of the Fulham attack, and it was a good job



Luton's funniest fan, comedian Eric Morecambe, presented cheques for £50 to the Chiltern Youth League and Luton Youth House before last night's match at Kenilworth Road. D. Pinion, far left, and Mr M. Faulkner, second left, received the cheques on behalf of their

organisations. On the right is Mr Len Hawkins, vice-chairman of the Town FC. The Luton club received £100 when they won the October John White award for the best fans, and decided to share it equally between two local youth organisations.

that Chris Nicholl, who returned in place of Branston, was in fine form.

Before the interval Keith Allen, who excelled in the adverse conditions, saw a shot go inches over the top, and the impression from the Luton performance was that they could still win, though a couple of their players, notably Bannister and Tees, were struggling a bit.

Davie shines

Though he made some timely clearances and tackles, Slough, too, found the conditions a bit trying and made a couple of slips. So did Keen, who lacked pace and penetration.

Davie did a good job in the Luton goal, making one particularly good save when he turned round a well-placed effort from Johnny Haynes early in the second half. He also stopped a good one from Barrett.

Conway was always Fulham's danger man, and his superbly controlled change of pace had Luton in a lot of trouble. Nicholl, Ryan and Davie were the Town's best defenders. French was the best forward.

Playing on the right because of the inclusion of Mike Harrison, French was one player who could always keep his feet. His magnificent ball control had his guards tied in knots, and often he left Brown grovelling in the snow.

Harrison showed some speed and direction in the first half, but faded a bit in the second. John Collins was left out, and acted as an un-needed substitute.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Davie; Ryan, Bannister; Keen, Nicholl, Slough; French, Macdonald, Tees, Allen, Harrison. Sub: Collins.

FULHAM: Seymour; Tranter, Brown; Horne, Matthewson, Callaghan; Conway, Richardson, Earle, Haynes, Barrett. Sub: Lloyd.

GOAL — Macdonald (47 mins).

Attendance: 16,485.

Referee: Mr H. Ellis (Goole).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LUTON TOWN	20	12	7	1	36	14	31
Rochdale	21	13	3	5	45	29	29
Orient	20	10	7	3	28	14	27
Barnsley	19	10	6	3	28	17	26
Torquay	20	9	7	4	31	16	25
Bradford C	19	10	5	4	26	14	25
Doncaster	19	10	5	4	24	14	25
Bristol Rovers	20	9	6	5	37	28	24
Mansfield Town	21	8	5	8	22	22	21
Brighton	20	8	4	8	22	23	20
Reading	20	8	4	8	32	36	20
Fulham	20	6	7	7	36	30	19
Shrewsbury	19	5	9	5	21	24	19
Trans	20	7	5	8	31	36	19
Bury	19	8	2	9	33	33	18
Plymouth	19	7	4	8	21	24	18
Walsall	20	7	4	9	22	30	18
Halifax	19	6	6	7	16	24	18
Rotherham	20	4	8	8	22	27	16
Southport	19	5	5	9	23	28	15
Bournemouth	19	4	6	9	19	28	14
Stockport C	21	3	5	13	12	32	11
Gillingham	19	2	3	14	15	33	7
Barrow	19	1	5	13	11	37	7

throughout the evening, circumstances turned the match into a farce.

Add to this the presence of comedians Eric Morecambe, who horsed about while presenting a cheque before the start, and Tommy Trinder, the Fulham chairman, who wise-cracked his way through the power-cuts, and you have the comic setting.

And considering the conditions the 22 performers put on a good show. They gave a willing display of running and bravery as the snow swirled round and all but blinded them.

Mistakes by both sides were exaggerated by the conditions,