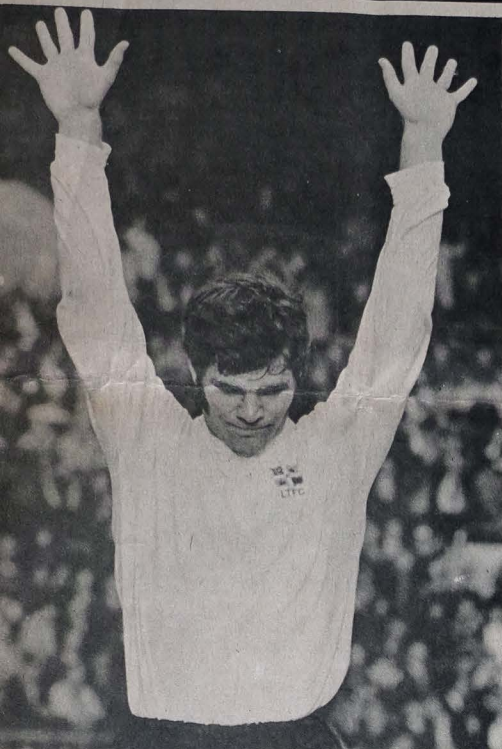


A PRILE FOR MAC AS TOWN GO NAP



hat'll do. Luton's Malcolm Macdonald shows the delight of rattling in a hat-trick against Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough on Saturday. And right — the start of it all. Mac bangs a number one to put Luton ahead.



WEDNESDAY BOOED AS LUTON RUN RIOT

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 1 LUTON TOWN 5

IF THERE'S anyone left who does not believe that Luton Town can hold their own in the Second Division, he must be a super-cynic. For on Saturday the Hatters pulverised this costly Wednesday side into flat-footed dejection with a performance of skill, strength and aggression that must have raised a few eyebrows among the soccer hierarchy.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

And it was no fluke win. Luton were four goals better than the Owls who plinked in disbelief as Malcolm Macdonald cracked home three old-fashioned centre-forward goals and Irishman Don Givens threw in another two to prove himself fully fit again.

The Englishman, the Irishman and Scotsman Jimmy Ryan formed a powerful three-pronged attack to which the Yorkshire side had no answer.

Luton made Sheffield look so bad that the home side were given the bird by their own slow-handclapping fans, while season ticket holders hurled abuse at the grim-faced directors in the stand.

Cold comfort

Luton now have a week to plot their revenge over Bolton who come to Kenilworth Road on Saturday. The Town are still trying to forget that first match of the season when they conceded four of their seven goals against at Burnden Park.

Luton's defence was in great form at Hillsborough — it was only stretched for one brief period in each half. After some juggling by Tony Read, former West Ham winger John Sissons had a clear look at goal, but John Moore, who improves every week, hooked the shot off the goal line.

And Wednesday tried a bit just after the interval, but by then they were three down. And in fact they were four down before they scored the sixth.

Even so, it was cold comfort for the Sheffield supporters who jeered their own side and began to cheer the skills of Luton.

So everyone, except the Sheffield players, was happy when Mac banged in his third goal eight minutes from time. To round off his hat-trick he collected a good through ball from Alan Slough, beat everyone in sight for speed, and crashed a rising shot past Grammitt.

It was a similar goal to his first which came after only 14 minutes. Court did the spade work before pushing a ball into Macdonald's path. He raced into range and belted it past Grammitt from just inside the box.

Macdonald laid the second on for Givens, and all he had to do was stroke it into the net from close in.

Macdonald collected the third himself, coolly lobbing the ball over Ellis's head, running round him and cracking it into the net.

Worst side

John Ryan engineered the fourth Luton goal, finding Givens with a lovely through ball and the Eire international took his time before scoring with a low shot.

Had Luton scored eight they would not have been flattered. Wednesday were the worst side I have seen this season, and manager Danny Williams, who worked such wonders at Swindon, is beginning to look a bit out of his depth.

...again. Chris Nicholl was

complete master in the air, but Luton hearts must have fluttered when he was trodden on by Downes in the first half. I can't get out of my mind the fact that Luton could be in trouble if Nicholl was injured.

They have no real cover at centre-half, though I suppose Alan Slough could step in, making room for Jack Bannister, who is unlucky not to be able to get in a settled side.

John Ryan played the 100,000 Sissons out of the match while Slough was never stretched by anyone, having a splendid match.

There was a bit of a look of offside about Wednesday's goal to my mind, but Jim Finney would not have dared disallow it with the home side four down and the fans baying for their blood.

Superb saves

Tony Read, returning to the club where he spent five years of his career, made some superb saves to discourage the intermittent ambitions of the Wednesday. He said afterwards: "It was lovely to come back here and do them 5-1. I never thought I would make a comeback here like this — let alone with a win of these proportions."

Read suffered just one lapse just before half-time when he conceded a corner, and then fumbled the flag-kick. But that was when Moore came to the rescue.

Hoy got through a tremendous amount of work in his usual energetic fashion, and has a good understanding with his midfield colleague Mike Keen, who continues to shine in every match.

Court was again in a tenacious mood, helping out in every department, and I thought Jimmy Ryan did well, in spite of his suspect hamstring. He is hard to tackle, and he laid across some excellent service for Mac and Givens.

Luton fans will already have observed that the Town have scored more times than any other side in the division, conceded less goals than anyone else and are one point behind Leicester, whom they could have beaten, Oxford, whom they did beat, and Hull, whom they have still to meet.

It makes healthy reading.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Hoy, Nicholl, Moore; Jimmy Ryan, Court, Macdonald, Keen, Givens. Sub: Busby.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY: Grammitt; Wilecock, Burton; Thompson, Ellis, Craig; Sinclair, Pendergast, Downes, Warboys, Sissons. Sub: Pugh.

Referee: Mr Jim Finney (Hereford).

Attendance: 15,189.

Goals: Macdonald (14, 45, 82 mins); Givens (44, 64 mins); Sissons (68 mins).