

BANG GOES THAT PROUD RECORD

Luton 1 Sunderland 2

LUTON slumped to their first home league defeat of the season before more than 19,000 fans this afternoon. Goals by Baker and Kerr did the damage.

It was frustration all the way for Luton. Two penalty appeals were ignored and Macdonald hit the crossbar.

From the start Sunderland looked a slick outfit playing some fast, smooth football, and from a long free kick on the left by Harvey John Moore had to clear hastily from in front of his goalkeeper.

First real shot of the match came in the eighth minute from Jimmy Ryan after a pass from Court. But Ryan had to hit it with his left foot and apart from lacking strength it went straight to Montgomery.

Givens sent Jimmy Ryan away on his touchline and he beat Harvey before putting in a high cross which was only a fraction too strong for Macdonald, who leapt high near the far post.

Early on Sunderland displayed an ability to fall back to defend in depth very quickly and every time Luton went into attack they met a battery

By **ROGER DUCKWORTH**

of at least six well-drilled defenders.

But in the 18th minute Luton claimed that they went ahead. Referee Pugh disagreed and awarded a corner.

Givens screwed in a curling shot from the by-line at the Oak Road end. It went over the head of goalkeeper Montgomery and with Macdonald racing in to finish the job off, it looked to me as if the ball was cleared from inside the goal by Irwin.

But by his decision the referee must have decided that the ball was out of play before Givens put it over.

There was some rather scrappy play in midfield by Luton, but there was some excitement when Macdonald burst past Todd. He was bundled off the ball by McGivern, but claims for a penalty were ignored by the referee.

First goal

The gods frowned on Luton in the 29th minute when a fierce drive by Macdonald from close in smacked against the underside of the crossbar, bounced straight down, and was hustled away by a Sunderland defender.

Luton were then subjected to a long period of pressure and Sunderland's efforts were rewarded in the 40th minute when Luton conceded their first home league goal of the season.

A Luton clearance was headed back strongly by full-back Irwin, and Hughes pushed a low ball inside for BAKER to slide it wide of Read.

HT: Luton 0, Sunderland 1

Disappointed at their first-half set-back, Luton went all out to put things right early in the second half.

After a Jimmy Ryan dribble, Hoy had a hard shot blocked and from the rebound Keen worked into a shooting position and went close with a strong rising attempt.

Then Court put in a dangerous-looking run but he would have done better to release a through pass to Macdonald who was running into a gap, instead of going it



GOAL! shouts Macdonald, but Givens, on the floor, has this great effort disallowed

Picture: KEITH DORNEY

alone and firing in a weak slow shot.

Luton were exposed again four minutes after the interval when Baker left John Ryan skidding along on his back-side, and sent Park through.

The Sunderland winger beat Read all ends up and was unlucky to see his shot rebound off the crossbar.

Luton put everything they had into pulling that one goal back, but things certainly weren't running for them.

Brave

Their game deteriorated, but a flicked header from Givens sent Macdonald away and he fought fiercely to get in a shot.

All he got, however, was a corner off Montgomery who went in bravely at his feet.

In the 63rd minute Luton substituted Viv Busby for David Court. To my mind Court was a bit unlucky to have been the one to be pulled off as on today's performance there were far worse performers than he.

Montgomery seemed impossible to beat. After a free kick given against McGivern, Keen drove the dead ball from a good 25 yards towards the top left-hand corner but the Sunderland goalkeeper flung himself across and tipped the ball over the top.

Tragedy

In the 67th minute tragedy hit Sunderland when McGivern went down in a tackle in midfield and the stretcher was called for. But it was not needed as the Sunderland manager and one of his assistants carried the injured player, who looked in a lot of pain, to the dressing room.

Young Chambers went on in his place to make his first team debut on his 21st birthday.

Macdonald did well to get a cross in from the right and Givens rose high to head towards goal, but with a promising situation developing, Busby fouled Montgomery in his enthusiasm to put Luton back in the game.

Suddenly Luton drew level Jimmy Ryan dribbled cleverly into the right hand side of the penalty area and swung across a centre which MACDONALD thumped past Montgomery.

But Luton's joy was short lived. With seven minutes left the referee awarded a free-kick against Moore for obstruction in the area. Baker took it and KERR dived head-first through a ruck of players to head an excellent goal past Read.

MATCH FACTS AT A GLANCE

TEAMS

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

SUNDERLAND: Montgomery, Irwin, Harvey, Todd, Pitt, McGivern; Park, Porterfield, Baker, Kerr, Hughes. Sub: Chambers.

Referee: Mr D. Pugh (Chester)

BAKER (Sunderland) 40 mins

MACDONALD (Luton) 78 mins

KERR (Sunderland) 83 mins

Attendance: 19,202

Eight in a row for Town's tenacious 12

LUTON's push for the top of Division Two was greeted by the worst Saturday of the season. Heavy cloud and drizzle was on the menu as the Town lined up against Sunderland.

But there was plenty of confidence in the Luton camp with an unbeaten home record and a clean sheet at home as far as goals were concerned.

Again Luton were unchanged and this was the eighth successive match that this 12 has represented the club.

To give them even more confidence, Sunderland were without their expensive former Burnley star Gordon Harris, who had to drop out

yesterday as the team was about to leave with an aggravated Achilles tendon

But there was still plenty of experience in the North-Easterners with the attack being led by former England centre-forward Joe Baker and with England under-23 skipper Colin Todd at right-half.

And in goal was Jim Montgomery, who was on the reserve list for Mexico this summer. He must be hoping for recognition in this field at Munich in 1974.

The match was televised by ITV for transmission tomorrow afternoon. It looked a good choice, for this, on paper, was surely one of Division Two's most attractive games.