A game that will linger on

WHAT a match this was! Few of the 15,000 people who went to Kenilworth Road today will forget it, with Macdonald equalising a minute from time.

Luton's first-half set-backs stemmed from two speculative shots in the first-half, each of which brought Carlisle a goal.

Luton did everything they possibly could in a tremendous first-half fight-back.

Strikers Macdonald and Givens each went close three times in nail-biting goalmouth incidents, but each time either the mud or the spirited Carlisle defence thwarted their ambitions.

And when Carlisle scored a third in the second-half, it looked all over for Luton.

But two goals in the 73rd and 75th minute by Jimmy Ryan and Alan Slough gave Luton the heart to keep going.

The match reached a fantastic climax with Macdonald grabbing a great goal.

Luton only drew, but their fighting qualities in the mud and rain this afternoon will not be forgotten for a long time.

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Roger Duckworth Verdict

THREE DOWN— TOWN GET POINT

Luton 3 Carlisle 3

LUTON did the seemingly impossible at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. They were trailing 3-0 to confident Carlisle, and everything they tried went wrong. Shots and headers went just wide or just over. But then Lady Luck did an about-turn. Jimmy Ryan, Alan Slough and then Malcolm Macdonald crashed in with good goals — to give Town a share of the points.

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

It was the worst afternoon of the season at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. It had rained most of the day, and the pitch was saturated.

There were pools of water in both goalmouths, and the open terrace behind the Kenilworth Road goal was empty except for a few who braved the elements in mackintoshes and under mushrroomed umbrellas.

Most of the supporters were huddled under the cover of the Bobbers Stand, the Oak Road enclosure and the main stands.

Both teams were unchanged. Luton fielding the same side for the tenth successive match.

Superb

Luton's play in the early stages lifted the gloom from the shoulders of the fans who had braved the weather.

In the first ten minutes, they played some superb attacking football. The match was only about five minutes old, when leading marksman Malcolm Macdonald burst into the picture in characteristic fashion.

His low drive from a goalmouth ruck was saved one-handed at the foot of a post by former Luton goalkeeper Allan Ross. The shot followed a good run and cross by Slough.

Carlisle had started in a confident manner and won two corners, one from a desperate clearance by Moore in the first minute of the match.

Aimless

And it was the Northerners who swept into a 12th minute lead with a move right out of the blue.

Full-back HEMPSTEAD moved towards the Luton penalty box unchecked. And, obviously surprised that nobody had bothered to tackle him, he lobbed a fairly weak looking shot at the Luton goal.

Read was slow to dive and the ball bobbled into the far corner of the Kenilworth Road net.

The goal gave Carlisle real heart, and for the next five minutes they outplayed Luton, challenging for every ball.

After 15 minutes, inside right Barton tried to show that his colleague's early goal was no fluke when he tried a shot from exactly the same place. But this time, Read was ready and made a good save.

Luton tried to hit back with a move down the middle as Jimmy Ryan looked to have the goal at his mercy, but, he crashed to the ground and Winstanley hooked the ball clear.

But Luton were clearly a rattled side, and after 17 minutes Carlisle went two up through a direct free-kick taken by Yorkshire cricketer BALDERSTONE from just outside the penalty box.

The free-kick was awarded for a foul by Nicholl, but the Luton players thought the decision should have gone the other way.

There was a suspicious gap in the Town's defensive wall, and BALDERSTONE hit the ball accurately through it and past a surprised Read into the net.

Foul

Luton fought back hard Macdonaldwas fouled on the corner of the penalty area, and Court sent across a good free kick. But Nicholl headed wide from a good position.

It just wasn't Luton's day. In the 22nd minute, a short ball by Macdonald caught the Carlisle defence napping, leaving Givens with an open goal. He looked up, picked his spot . . . and shot wide.

With the crowd still groaning, Givens returned the compliment with a short pass inside to Macdonald, but the centre-forward stubbed the ground as he tried to get in a quick shot under pressure.

Luton went close yet again when a superb long throw from Hoy was nodded on by Givens. But Macdonald was again unlucky when his first-time effort skidded past the post.

The Luton forwards were striving desperately for a goal, and both Macdonald and Givens deserved better luck for their whole-hearted effort inside the box.

Macdonald, in particular, was suffering. In the 32nd minute, he burst between two Carlisle defenders after a Givens pass and again with the goal at his mercy, drove just over the top. He was obviously getting over anxious.

Lunges

With the first-half running out, Macdonald slipped a ball into the middle and Hoy and Givens fought desperately to put it into the net. But again desperate lunges by Carlisle defenders kept the ball out.

HT: Luton 0 Carlisle 2

Luton began the second-half as they left off at the interval — intent on saving the situation.

Macdonald won a corner straight away. Then John Ryan won another. From the kick, the ball bobbled around in the Carlisle goalmouth before being hacked away.

Carlisle centre forward Hatton got past Nicholl but, with the help of Moore, the centre half retrieved the situation.

Carlisle had yet another let off when Macdonald and Ryan went up together for a long throw from Hoy. Again, Ross got the lucky break. The ball spun out of his hand, but outside the post. Nicholl headed the corner kick over.

But things were still far from going Luton's way. Carlisle built up a good move through the middle, and Nicholl had to scoop the ball away for a corner.

From the kick, Martin collected a flicked header and swept the ball past Read for Carlisle's third goal.

Luton began to get less and less of their own way against a well-drilled and determined Carlisle.

Jimmy Ryan shot into the picture with a good run and left-foot effort, but it was blocked en route to goal.

With 20 minutes to go, Luton's task looked hopeless, but Court tried to spark a recovery with a long powerful drive that was only inches wide.

But suddenly Luton were back in the game. Two goals in just over a minute from Jimmy Ryan and Alan Slough put the crowd back on their feet — and Luton back in with a chance.

In the 73rd minute, Jimmy Ryan netted after Macdonald had hit the crossbar and Givens had seen his shot ricochet off a full-back's knee on the goal-line.

Surge

And before the cheers had died down, Alan Slough swept through the middle of a Luton attack and thumped the ball into the net.

With the crowd roaring, Luton powered forward in a tremendous surge of spirit. Both John Ryan and John Moore went close.

With the sands of time running out, this fantastic match was brought to a fitting finale when top-scorer Macdonald swept the ball into the net for an 88th minute equaliser for Luton.

MATCH FACTS AT A GLANCE

TEAMS

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

CARLISLE: Ross; Hemstead, Davis; Tarnent, Winstanley, Sutton; Martin, Barton, Hatton, Owen, Balderstone. Sub: Gorman.

Referee: Mr H. Williams (Sheffield).

GOALS

Hemstead (Carlisle) 12 mins
BALDERSTONE (Carlisle) 17 mins
MARTIN (Carlisle) 55 mins
JIMMY RYAN (Luton) 73 mins
SLOUGH (Luton) 75 mins
Macdonald (Luton) 88 mins

Attendance: 14,837

Carlisle goalkeeper Allan Ross dives to foil a Luton attack