

Russell rocket knocks sad Luton off the top

70/71

Blackburn 1 Luton 0: by RONALD KENNEDY

LOWLY BLACKBURN knocked Luton off the top of Division II with a fighting display that caught the visitors completely off balance and gave Blackburn a new chance of avoiding the big drop.

Luton, expecting an easy victory at Ewood Park, gave Blackburn a goal start—and then found the task too tough.

Admittedly, they completely dominated the game for the last 15 minutes, but were kept out by a string of brilliant saves from Roger Jones, and a goal line clearance by Allan Hunter from Mike Keen.

Perhaps the fact that Blackburn have a new chairman in William Bancroft had something to do with their fighting display—which sent their supporters home buzzing with excitement.

The way Blackburn hung on was part of the new-found spirit which marked the entire team's performance. Certainly everyone gave everything he had and Ken Knighton and Hunter showed more purpose than for much of the season.

But what of poor Luton? Hunter probably did more than anyone to send them home empty handed. He immediately latched on to Malcol Macdonald, who was left to labour fitfully through an afternoon in which the ball either did not arrive or came when he was smothered by his watchdog.

PRAISE

Equally, Chris Nichol did much the same to teenager Terry Eccles in the first half when the youngster was trying to live up to the praise of his manager as the new front line leader.

Eccles may have looked raw, but at least his enthusiasm meant that Luton's back four never had the time to relax when in possession and use the ball to advantage.

The goal that mattered came in the 71st minute and sweet it was. Rogers, looking so fresh, ran full-tilt at Luton's defence, leaving three men behind him before sending a delicate chip into the Luton goalmouth.

Alex Russell was there to meet it on the volley and it ripped into the roof of the net.

It was never an angry game although Roger Hoy (later substituted) was booked in the 16th minute when he threw the ball away, obviously upset by a throw-in decision.

The former Second Division pacemakers were left reflecting on some none too difficult chances that went begging and perhaps even more so on the fact that they began to show their true mettle only when they were a goal down.

But perhaps this defeat will have taught them a few lessons.

BLACKBURN. — Jones: Goodwin, Wilson, Hunter, Mulvaney, Knighton, Metcalfe, Russell, Eccles, Rogers, Hill. Sub: Conlon.

LUTON. — Read: Ryan John, Ban-
nister, Hoy, Nichol, Slough, Ryan J.
Court, Macdonald, Keen, Givins. Sub:
Busby.