



Blackburn Rovers' wing half Hunter goes up to challenge in a goalmouth tussle.

Russell on target as Rovers go all out

70/71

By ALF THORNTON

A TREMENDOUSLY improved performance by Blackburn Rovers in front of their new chairman, Mr Bill Bancroft, saw them steal the thunder from promotion chasing Luton Town.

Luton were mostly on the defensive as the Rovers went to work with tremendous spirit and determination and only two fine saves by

THE GOAL:

RUSSELL (Rovers) .. 70 min

John Ryan took the free kick and put it into the goalmouth, and Jones, challenged by Court, sliced his punched-out, the ball going straight to Keen, who shot wide with all the goal to aim at.

Luton persisted and Jones had to go full length to deal with a shot from Jim Ryan, which came at him through a crowd of defenders. The Rovers hit straight back and only a magnificent save by Read prevented Eccles from giving them the lead.

He ran on to a loose ball in the penalty area and slammed in a tremendous drive only to see Read throw himself to his left to push the ball out. It went to Russell, but, from the narrowest of angles, he shot wide.

It was Rovers and not Luton who were looking a top of the table team. The Rovers enthusiasm had Luton reeling.

CORNER

Eccles won a corner on the right by sheer persistence and from it Knighton powered in a terrific left foot volley which flew only inches wide.

Knighton was going through again in a splendid run when Hoy brought him down heavily just outside the penalty area but the free kick brought no reward.

Jones had to catch under the bar a teasing dropping ball from Hoy in a brief Luton counter. Russell took the Rovers forward again and from his pass Rogers hit in a long distance shot which gave Read no trouble.

Goodwin had to kick for a corner in a big hurry when Hoy and John Ryan took Luton forward. Half-time:

ROVERS 0, LUTON 0

Hill was fouled as he was taking on Russell's pass. He took the free kick himself only for the beanpole Nicholl, who was once on Burnley's books, to head the ball away in a crowded goalmouth.

Rogers tricked two defenders beautifully in little room but was tripped at the edge of the penalty area as he tried to come inside and Knighton's free kick was cleared.

The Rovers almost did the trick in a brilliant move with Wilson sending Hill away down his wing. Hill outpaced John Ryan and centred low and hard for Rogers at full stretch to connect with the ball but shoot inches over with Read beaten.

It was still nearly all Rovers, but Luton were defending doggedly and in depth. They posed a tough problem for the Rovers forward line, which, even with Eccles there, is on the small side.

CENTRE

But still the Rovers pegged away with the crowd encouraging them, and there was another near thing for Luton when Goodwin got the ball into the middle for Eccles to turn it on to Hill, who was at full stretch. He still managed to get a foot to the ball and turn it inches out-side

Eccles, playing his first game at centre forward, never stopped chasing and showed a good deal of skill as well.

Terry Eccles took over from dropped Bryan Conlon to lead the Rovers attack for the first time in his ninth senior appearance.

ROVERS

Jones
Goodwin Wilson
Hunter Mulvaney Knighton
Russell Rogers
Metcalf Eccles Hill



Ryan (Jim) McDonald Givens
Court Keen
Hoy Nicholl Slough
Ryan (John) Bannister
Read

LUTON TOWN

Referee: Mr W. B. Johnson, of Kendal.

The Rovers attacked the Blackburn end and quickly forced two corners, through Rogers and Knighton. The first was on the right and the second on the left. They got nothing from them but kept going forward with plenty of spirit.

SPIRIT

A splendid move by Knighton and Russell in a quick one-two through the middle saw Knighton take Russell's return pass and without checking hit a tremendous right-foot drive which Read did very well to pull down.

Offside by Givens, going to meet McDonald's pass ruined Luton's first attack and the Rovers took up the running again for Eccles to bore his way through on the right in determined style but he hit his cross drive well wide.

The Rovers were going into their work with plenty of spirit which made a refreshing change, and Luton had been mostly on the defensive up to now.

But suddenly they came to life to force a left-wing corner which Givens placed well and Mulvaney had to head hurriedly for another corner as MacDonald came in for a header.

Then, in the next minute the burly Luton centre forward went through the middle dangerously, and Jones had to dash out to dive at his feet.

WIDE

In the 16th minute Hoy petulantly threw the ball yards away after a throw-in had been given to the Rovers and not to Luton as he expected and was promptly booked by the referee.

Rogers cut in from the left and, under pressure by John Ryan, who was breathing down his neck, he topped his shot from a narrow angle and the ball went straight to Read.

When Mulvaney conceded a free kick for a foul on MacDonald, Luton wasted a great chance of going ahead against the run of play.

There was a quick chance for Russell when Knighton centred from the left, but he had to turn and before he could shoot Slough had nipped in to put the ball back to Read.

There was reward for the Rovers and richly they had earned it. After 70 minutes Rogers made the goal with a magnificent run in which he left three defenders trailing.

He took the ball to the by-line and then put it back into the penalty area for RUSSELL to run in and meet it first time and slam it into the roof of the net.

Luton now had no alternative but to come out and they were very near an equaliser when Givens put over a teasing centre which beat Jones and found Keen at the far post.

His header was on target but Hunter was there to hammer the ball off the line. With 20 minutes to go Luton brought off Hoy and sent on their substitute Vivian Busby.

Another scare for Rovers came when Court got possession in a goal mouth scramble but Wilson blocked his shot and, though the ball spun out to Keen, he drove

Final—

ROVERS	1
LUTON TOWN	0