

DAY OF THE BIG ROBBERY

SUNDERLAND 2, LUTON TOWN 2

If there was punishment for soccer theft, Luton would do more time than the Great Train Robbers! They not only pinched a point—they went dangerously close to getting away with both.

That would have been an awesome injustice because on the balance of play they were never really in it until late in the game.

That's not an excuse for Sunderland. It is more of a condemnation.

Teams with promotion ambitions know that craft and flowing football don't win matches. It's goals that count, and Sunderland should have had half a dozen.

They had complete command of the first half, with Bobby Kerr and Ian Porterfield dominating the game from the middle of the field.

But the only goal to come from their superiority was Dave Watson's 18th minute drive from the edge of the penalty box.

Dennis Tueart set it up and Watson powered the ball low just inside the post.

There should have been another goal after 30 minutes when Tueart, always elusive and dangerous, flashed a header for the net.

Luton keeper Tony Read had no hope of getting it, but his centre-half Chris Nichol, dived to palm the ball away.

Manchester referee Ricky Nicholson added Nichol to his lengthy list of bookings this season.

When Billy Hughes stepped up for the spot-kick, Luton were once again let off the hook. His side-footed effort hit the base of the post.

Sunderland's agony didn't end there. Twelve minutes after the interval Luton were level and it was Nichol who was doing a jig of delight.

He prodded the ball high into the net from a corner kick by Gordon Hindson, a one-time Sunderland fan bought by Luton from Newcastle recently.

And it was Hindson, whose mazey left wing runs frequently made full-back Dick Malone look sick, who laid on Luton's second goal in the 75th minute.

He galloped into the penalty box and slide-ruled a pass for incoming right winger Peter Anderson to score from close range.

That put Luton in front and it needed a death-or-glory volley by Mick McGiven to win Sunderland some justice.

The ball had been partially cleared by Luton when McGiven, 25 yards out, flung his left boot at it. The ball rocketed high into the top corner of the Luton net.

Referee Nicholson got two more names into his

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book, before the end, Sunderland's Tueart and Luton's Vic Halom, both for fouls on the goal-keepers.

Sunderland's second half troubles started when Ian Porterfield limped out of the match 10 minutes after the interval.

Porterfield had linked superbly with Kerr to spread Sunderland's attacks both down the flanks and up the middle.

When he went so did the cohesion and understanding. Jimmy Hamilton, the 16-year-old substitute, could not be expected to fill such a gap adequately.

Luton took quick advantage and began pressing forward to put the Roker defence under pressure.

What chances they got they took—and that is a lesson Sunderland will have to learn quickly if they hope to hit their promotion target.

SUNDERLAND. — Montgomery, Malone, Coleman, Harvey, Pitt, Porterfield, McGivern, Kerr, Watson, Hughes, Tueart. Sub.: Hamilton.

LUTON.—Read, Ryan, Slough, Shanks, Nichol, Moore, Anderson, Keen, Halom, Givens, Hindson. Sub.: Busby.