

OH, LUTON, THIS WAS TOO BAD

74/75 (F.C.)

IT IS unbelievable that a side can be so good on Saturday and, with the same men playing in the same positions, so pathetically bad three days later. Luton's form is as up and down as a motorway lorry and last night they were broken down in a lay-by.

There was nothing there at all. The battery was run down. A couple of soft headers by Anderson, a saved shot by Alston and some erratic long-range stuff by Husband was all Luton offered in the way of goal efforts.

In fact the most enthusiastic in the goalmouth was centre-half Litt who headed a couple of corners wide.

"We were bad, totally bad," admitted manager Harry Haslam afterwards. But one got the feeling that he was not all that worried about going out of the League Cup with his club's league position so precarious.

"You don't like to lose anything," he said. "I have said what I thought about their performance but having said that I will add that it was only the League Cup."

But Luton must not use this just as an excuse — and then fail in the league. They must use it as a reason for finding their feet in Division One.

Luton looked like Wolf Cubs taking on Queen's Scouts.

Sheffield United 2 Luton Town 0
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Sheffield, I thought, looked stronger, more accomplished in all departments and this made it all the more galling to hear their manager Ken Furphy say afterwards: "We didn't play as well as we can. We beat them without getting into top gear."

Motivated

He added: "We were like a electric light bulb, going brightly and then dimming as a move ended."

United were sparked by a strong-looking Tony Currie who was motivated by the knowledge that England manager Don Revie was in the stand.

But Luton failed to grip the game in midfield, where they were but a shadow of Saturday's team. They must now whip themselves into shape for Saturday's visit of fellow-strugglers Birmingham.

The only Luton player to come through with any real credit was goalkeeper Keith Barber. He made seven outstanding saves, two of them, from Woodward and Currie, out of this world.

The inexperience of the Luton defence was exposed by the strong running of Dearden, Woodward and Currie, and Barber was given little protection. Fortunately he was able to look after himself.

Luton had a couple of five-minute spells when they showed some interest in attack but it was only lukewarm.

Alston was hardly in it, Husband was forced to probe from deep positions and Anderson elected to leave the field in the 77th minute with a leg injury.

This meant a chance for Garner to go on and John Ryan was pushed to midfield with Jim Ryan going on the

right wing. It made little difference. By this time Luton were licked.

Of the midfielders, I thought Jim Ryan came out of it the best.

United went ahead in the 23rd minute when Husband gave the ball away in his own half. Hindson missed his tackle and Keith Eddy cruised through the defence to beat Barber with the long, swerving shot that bounced in front of the diving keeper and shot into the net off the wet turf.

Luton hung on until half-time but in the 58th minute a splendid move ripped them apart. It involved Currie, Dearden, Woodward and Eddy and was finished off by Bradford who beat Buckley's tackle to shoot past Barber.

Now Luton have no excuses. They have lost interest in the League Cup. Let's see them sort Birmingham out

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber; Shanks, Buckley; Anderson, Litt, John Ryan; Hindson, Jim Ryan, Husband, West, Alston. Sub: Garner (for Anderson, 77 mins).

SHEFFIELD UNITED: Brown; Badger, Hemsley; Eddy, Colquhoun, Franks; Woodward, Bradford, Dearden, Currie, Field. Sub: Garbett (for Badger, 14 mins).

REFEREE: Mr G. Hill (Leicester).

ATTENDANCE: 14,150.

GOALS: Eddy (Sheff Utd, 23 mins); Bradford (Sheff Utd, 58 mins).