

CURRIE GIVES

THE TOWN A SOAKING

THE Hatters got a soaking this afternoon . . . both from Sheffield and from the rain which streamed down miserably at Kenilworth Road.

The former was the most powerful adversary, and United's Tony Currie clinched the match with a second-half goal.

Ron Futcher had his first taste of Division One football when he substituted Rod Fern.

Luton manager Harry Haslam resisted the pressure and the temptation to put goal scoring protege Ron Futcher in the first 11 for this afternoon's home game against Sheffield United. But he recognised the lad who has scored 20 reserve team goals this season by naming him as substitute.

The Luton boss declined to name his team yesterday, just adding Futcher and Adrian Alston to last week's side that lost narrowly at Newcastle.

The match got off to a slow start and it was a good two minutes before the ball went into either penalty area. And when it did it was from a Currie free-kick for Sheffield, but it flapped harmlessly out of play with Hemsley unable to make ground on the overlap.

Rod Fern seemed none too keen at some strong tackling by Eddy early in the game. But when he won a free kick for one such infringement Luton could do nothing about it.

The drizzle that had been coming down at the start of the match turned to heavy rain after only five minutes, and the game was obviously going to be one of those slippery-slidy affairs.

The first serious shot of the match came from Sheffield's Woodward after seven minutes. Barber got behind the shot, but could only take it at the second go. The event arose out of some midfield mucking about by Luton.

Luton were again back pedalling when a clever header from Dearden sent Currie away on the left. He got in a beautiful centre which Barber struggled to palm

Luton 0 Sheffield United 1 By ROGER DUCKWORTH

away to Garbett, but then he managed to save the shot and Luton were safe. Safe but struggling.

Luton's best move so far came in the 13th minute when Chambers and Hindson started a move in midfield and Aston lobbed a good long ball to Fern who headed on to Anderson who was offside.

A mistake by Hemsley just outside the Sheffield penalty box allowed Hindson time to shoot, but he banged the ball over.

Some more good work by Aston gave Anderson possession, but after reaching the box he got in a shot, only to see it blocked. This seems to be the story of Luton's life.

Luton were really getting into the game, and good work by skipper Thomson ended with a cross-field ball to Chambers who got in a good shot which went just over the top.

Then a centre by Anderson was challenged strongly by West, but Brown, who was fouled, made a good recovery at his feet.

After 20 minutes Mr Furphy began to get a bit worried and came from the stand to the touchline to give instructions. As he did so Barber made a grand save at Speight's feet, and from a free kick by Faulkner Aston almost scored on the far post.

A good through ball from West was narrowly cut out by Colquhoun before Aston could get there, but Brown made a diving save to stop the deflection. It might have been better had West shot in the first place.

Then Field sent Speight through and with only Barber to beat he shot wide to a roar from the Luton crowd.

Luton pressed again and from a Hindson free-kick Faulkner was unlucky in the air. But the ball was deflected for a corner at which Garner had a bite to bring a good save out of Brown — and another corner which was wasted.

A mistake in the Sheffield goalmouth following a Hindson free-kick ended with Garner, Shanks and Fern all missing a good chance from close in before goalkeeper Brown could get to the ball. This is why Luton are at the bottom of the table.

In the 44th minute Colquhoun was booked for a foul on Hindson in the middle of the field.

HT: 0-0.

As the rain continued to pour down Luton tried to regain some of the brightness they had managed to create in the first half, but a centre from a good position by Aston, and then the chance of something from Hindson on the left went by the board because of bad direction.

A good run across the corner of the box by Chambers ended with a pass out to Aston, but he was offside before being tackled by the energetic Badger.

Try as they might Luton found themselves being pushed back by the skills of Sheffield who used the probing ball to good effect. Woodward was unlucky after Garner had failed to stop one good pass, and then Faulkner received yet another booking



West jumps in a Luton attack

for a foul on Field.

In the 55th minute Barber made a diving save to a header from Dearden, and the Luton crowd began to cheer as Ronnie Futcher began to warm up on the touchline.

In the 58th minute a crossfield ball from the right produced a lead for Sheffield. It was knocked on, twice

before Currie scored as Luton appealed for an offside flag.

A minute later Ronnie Futcher was sent on to make his league debut in place of Rod Fern who trotted off looking a bit unhappy about it all.

Luton's first chance of the second half fell to Hindson who again it a soft right-footer through the defence to give Brown ample time to save.

A minute later young urcher had his first go at goal in the First Division as he forced Brown into a diving save with an effort from close in.

Referee Sinclair seemed to get a bit mixed up about goal kicks and corners for a minute or two. He gave Sheffield a goal kick that was obviously a Luton corner, and later he gave Luton a corner that looked like a goal kick. Nothing came from either.

Then, following a shot by Futcher, Colquhoun looked to handle in the area — but Mr Sinclair did not want to know.

West had the chance of a shot from just outside the United penalty area, but he mishit it and again Luton's hopes were frustrated.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber, Shanks, Thomson, Chambers, Faulkner, Garner, Hindson, Fern, Anderson, West, Aston. Sub: Ron Futcher.

SHEFFIELD UNITED: Brown, Badger, Hemsley, Garbett, Colquhoun, Eddy, Woodward, Speight, Dearden, Currie, Field. Sub: Bradford.

REFEREE: Mr M. Sinclair (Guildford).

CURRIE (Sheffield) in 58 minutes.

ATTENDANCE: 12,670



Anderson (centre) tries a shot for Luton

The Duckworth verdict...

THE bloke behind me in the stand who said: "Don't write a verdict this week, use last week's," was just about right.

For once again we saw Luton create chances that they couldn't convert into goals in the first half, and then struggle and go a goal behind in the second.

The biggest moment of the afternoon as far as Luton were concerned was the sending on of Ron Futcher.

They saw the appearance of the lad who has scored 20 reserve goals in as many games as the comin of salvation for Luton.

But nothing is going to be as easy as that. Young Ron almost scored with his second kick of the game, but he is obviously going to hav to be coaxed along and not to have too much expected of him too soon.

He came on a minute after any Currie had given Sheffield the lead. Until then Luton had given fair account of themselves—especially in the first half.

But effort is not enough. You've got to have a striker who can score goals. Peter Anderson played at centre-forward without a great deal of support. As his chin went down on to his chest whenever he failed to do the right thing.