

SAD HATTERS SO UNLUCKY

Luton 2 Burnley 3

74/75

GOALS, goals, goals. But sadly no points for Luton Town this afternoon.

Five goals in less than 20 minutes thrilled the Kenilworth Road crowd — but it was Burnley who went home happy.

They went ahead through Ray Hankin. John Faulkner equalised. Leighton James put them ahead again. Peter Spiring equalised. And Hankin clinched the winner.

Harry Haslam left out Adrian Alston for the match, the first at Kenilworth Road for three weeks.

Aston kept his place on the left wing with £70,000 Peter Spiring wearing the centre forward's jersey. Alston settled for the No 12 shirt.

Otherwise the team was the same that lost 4-2 at Stoke a fortnight ago.

Burnley, comfortably placed half way up the First Division, were unchanged with goalkeeper Alan Stevenson and midfield man Peter Noble both passing late fitness tests.

Alan West, the Luton vice captain, was captain for the day against his old club and led the Hatters out to a sadly lukewarm cheer from a small crowd.

Jim Ryan, Anderson and West took part in Luton's first attack but it was easily cleared. Ryan came back with a high centre which Stevenson — under pressure from Husband — caught well.

The first excitement came in the fourth minute when Spiring sent Aston free on the left with a fine header. The Luton winger beat Stevenson, hit the right hand post of the Oak Road goal — but was stopped in his tracks by the off-side whistle.

Threat

Barber did well to catch a long centre from Brennan on the left — albeit at the second attempt.

As Burnley got more into the game John Ryan was forced to find touch from the penalty area.

Then Burnley won their first corner and Fletcher got in a header which produced a fine save from Barber.

The ground was already very heavy and the threat from big black clouds rolling in from Dunstable was ominous.

The big Burnley defenders dealt easily with Luton's free kicks into the box. Two of them were headed away

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cleanly without a Luton man getting a touch.

In the 13th minute a splendid build up from Aston, Faulkner and Thomson ended with West firing in a terrific shot from an Anderson pass. Stevenson made a spectacular save.

Then Spiring had a hard-driven shot well saved by Burnley's under 23 international goalkeeper.

Luton kept up the pressure and Stevenson did well to catch an Aston corner.

Following a free kick for a foul on Anderson by Ingham, Jim Ryan shot wide. With so many goal attempts it seemed that Luton must score.

Then Collins got in a shot for Burnley but it was yards too high.

Clever

After West had been robbed in the Luton penalty area, Hankin cleverly dribbled the ball clear and set up an attack on his own, from which Barber was forced to go full length to stop a low shot from Fletcher.

Anderson and Aston attacked from the left but the best they could get was a corner after Anderson went a step too far trying to get into a shooting position.

In spite of Luton's promise it was Burnley who took the lead in the 36th minute when Hankin easily headed in a cross from Brennan.

A minute later they almost got a second when James cut in fast from the right and saw his shot mis-kicked off the line by Faulkner.

Stevenson, surprised by a long-range drive from Jim Ryan produced another splendid save.

After a chase back with Fletcher, Thomson conceded a corner. It was well placed by Collins and centre-half Waldron headed just wide.



■ John Aston in a battle for possession

In the 31st minute Luton went even closer to scoring when Garner headed an Aston corner on to the top of the crossbar.

Then Spiring should have scored for Luton but he muffed his shot after collecting a superb pass from Aston.

Burnley hit back and the Luton defence opened up to allow Hankin through. His shot beat Barber but rebounded off the crossbar. And with the Luton defence in tatters, James cut in from the left and put another shot across the goalmouth.

In the 41st minute Spiring sent Jim Ryan through and the pass produced a superb shot from Anderson which got another save from Stevenson who turned the ball round for a corner.

Aston took the corner on the right and the ball was deflected to Faulkner who did well to head into the net from a difficult position.

HT: Luton 1 Burnley 1

Luton piled into the attack straight from the re-start. Husband won a corner taken by Aston and a header by

Garner produced another flag kick from the right.

The second brought a shot from West which was well stopped by Rodaway. Then Stevenson stopped a cleverly angled shot from Aston after Jim Ryan had done well to get in the centre.

But Burnley weathered the storm and rather luckily went back into the lead. James cut in from a narrow angle on the right, passed to Ingham, got the ball back and shot through a crowded goalmouth into the net.

His effort stunned the hopeful home crowd into silence.

But the Town hit straight back. Anderson passed out to Jim Ryan on the right wing and Spiring brilliantly headed down Ryan's accurate centre to beat Stevenson.

The amazing goal glut continued and Burnley went back into the lead with a soft goal from Hankin. The ball trickled to him near the penalty spot. Luton did not get in a tackle and the big striker tapped the ball into the net.

To their credit Luton continued to fight like blazes.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON: Barber, John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Garner, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Spiring, West, Aston. Sub: Alston.

BURNLEY: Stevenson, Newton, Brennan, Ingham, Waldron, Rodaway, Noble, Hankin, Fletcher, Collins, James. Sub: Flynn.

Referee: Mr J. Taylor (Wolverhampton)

HANKIN in the 36th minute
FAULKNER in the 42nd minute
James in the 49th minute
Spiring in the 51st minute
HANKIN in the 53rd minute
ATTENDANCE: 11,816

Good work by West and Aston allowed Jim Ryan to get in a shot but it was too high.

James had to have treatment after a bad tackle by Spiring. Burnley began playing a clever possession game to frustrate Luton's hopes.

A good crossfield move by Luton ended with an Anderson shot being deflected for a corner which was again swung in from the right by Aston. It was caught by Stevenson.

Cheer

With 14 minutes left Luton sent on substitute Alston to replace Jimmy Husband, who got a sympathetic cheer from the fans.

Alston in fact almost scored with his first touch, heading a Jimmy Ryan free kick a yard or so wide.



■ Alan West in hot pursuit of the ball

ALTHOUGH they never managed to take the lead Luton were unlucky not to have won this game.

In the first half alone Burnley's under-23 goalkeeper Alan Stevenson made four superb saves from West, Spiring, Jim Ryan and Anderson.

And in the second half Aston, John Ryan and Husband were all foiled by an outstanding performance from the Burnley 'keeper.

It was always an entertaining game with four goals coming in 11 hectic minutes around the interval. Three minutes before the break Faulkner equalised Hankin's 36th minute goal.

Just after the break James put Burnley back ahead but two minutes later Spiring headed a clever goal on his home debut. But a minute later slack marking by the Luton defence allowed Hankin to give Burnley the lead for the third time and Luton could do little about it.

Luton's main strength was from West and Jimmy Ryan in midfield with Anderson coming through cleverly and joining in the graft.

Luton's biggest fault was that they gave the ball away too easily. They were not as good as Burnley at possession football.

Fourteen minutes from the end Luton gambled by throwing Alston into the fray and the Town attacks continued with Spiring, Aston and Alston showing plenty of industry.

Luton won a flurry of corners towards the end and two goalworthy efforts were cleared off the line by heavily pressured Burnley defence.