

BIG DEFENCE GAP AS BURNLEY WIN

74/75

LUTON have proved the pessimists right . . . and after their revival — in which they got seven points out of their last four league games — they lost to Burnley this afternoon.

The Town's defence was a gaping hole to let in Billy Ingham with a beautiful chip past keeper Horn in the 33rd minute.

Luton started the second half strongly, but strength was not enough to get them the equaliser they needed so desperately.

Unchanged Luton were soon on to the defensive at Turf Moor this afternoon.

Burnley were awarded a free-kick near the left hand corner flag which Collins floated over cleverly causing Horn to leap backwards to palm the ball just over the Luton crossbar for a corner.

But in the opening encounters both John and Jimmy Ryan looked in good control of the situation and both used the ball cleverly.

And at the other end Ron Fletcher put in a dash down the right and did well to get round Newton and put in a cross which Noble helped across the face of the goal causing Stevenson, the England under-23 goalkeeper, a whole host of problems.

Then Brennan slid around Faulkner after Fletcher had won a long free-kick from Newton, and got in a hard shot after being allowed to turn.

But Horn was again wide awake and just stepped sideways to catch the ball cleanly.

Radio reports from the ground before the game suggested it was empty. The fans must have turned up late because by the start the ground looked comfortably full.

As expected Burnley brought back defender Brennan following injury and although he wore the No 7 shirt he played at left-back.

A strong run by Anderson through the middle ended with him feeding the ball out to Ron Fletcher on the left, but the fair-haired twin's cross, with his left foot, was off target and too strong for Husband, going out of play behind the goal.

Referee McNally had a word with Luton skipper Alan West, who was playing against his old club, after he brought down Noble who was attacking from a right-wing position. But again Horn was wide awake and caught the free kick from Collins easily.

Strong clearances from Ron Fletcher and Faulkner, following a free kick by Ingham, gave the Luton defence confidence, but a minute later Hankin was allowed a free header from in front of the penalty spot, following a cross from the right. He fluffed it giving Horn the easiest of catches.

Burnley 1 Luton 0
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

Luton put in a couple of spirited raids, but didn't get very far against a defence that covered quickly. A mistake in midfield by Burnley let Ron Fletcher clear on a lone attack, but with three men against him he couldn't do much about it.

At the other end a long shot from Newton caused Horn to dive quickly and he was grateful there was nobody handy to make use of the rebound off his arms.

Again John Ryan was full of running and he got in two good shots, cutting in from the right, one of which brought a good save out of Stevenson and the other going wide.

Ron Fletcher beat Newton with a good body swerve over on the left, but again Stevenson moved quickly to collect his cross before Husband could get on the scene.

Burnley had looked the more promising side since the start and after 33 minutes they took a deserved lead through Ingham. Luton's management will surely want to know why the defence opened up to

MATCH DETAILS	
BURNLEY: Stevenson, Ingham, Newton, Noble, Thomson, Rodaway, Brennan, Hankin, Fletcher, Collins, James. Sub: Morris.	
LUTON TOWN: Horn, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher, Jimmy Ryan, Husband, Ron Fletcher, West, Aston. Sub: King.	
REFEREE: Mr K. McNally (Ellesmere Port).	
INGHAM (Burnley) in 33 minutes	
ATTENDANCE: 17,209	

allow Ingham through to chip a delightful shot past Horn from a couple of yards inside the box.

A header into the middle from Husband gave Anderson a fleeting chance, but he was well to the left of the goal and Stevenson palmed his low shot away for a corner. This was banged over by Jimmy Ryan, but again Stevenson was in command of his area and plucked it cleanly off Faulkner's forehead.

After some rare sloppiness by the Burnley defence, Jimmy Ryan was allowed a free shot at goal from the 18-yard line, but it was blocked and Ron Fletcher won a corner from the rebound.

But it was all to no avail. Again the Burnley defence was too strong for the Luton attack and it was back to square one.

A strong free-kick by Collins hit a deflection in the Luton defence and Horn was lucky to change his direction and stop the ball at the second attempt with Fletcher racing in.

Three minutes before half-time Aston nearly scored with a strong left-footer from outside the box following a good pass by West, but Stevenson made another fine save, diving to his left to turn the ball behind for another Luton corner.

Then West tried a speculative shot from about 30 yards, but it went well wide to the accompaniment of some rather good humoured jeers from the home crowd.

A minute later Jimmy Ryan was denied a goal by Stevenson. He hit a hard low shot from the edge of the box and although the Burnley keeper looked to have dived late, he managed to get his fingers to the ball to turn it round for a corner.

HT: 1-0

A mistake by Anderson in the Luton penalty box almost gave Ingham his second goal. He got in a lob, but Horn dived spectacularly to catch the ball.

Then at the other end West got in another powerful shot on target, but again Stevenson dived sharply to deny him a goal.

Burnley hit straight back and Luton goalkeeper Horn was angry with his defence when Hankin was allowed to chip a shot just over his crossbar.

A strong cross from Buckley ended with a hard header from Husband being deflected over the Burnley crossbar by Anderson.

And then from a short free kick by Buckley, John Ryan powered a terrific left-footer just over the crossbar. Luton certainly started the second half with bags of authority.

A quarter of an hour into the second half Ron Fletcher collected his fifth booking of the season for going in with his feet up against goalkeeper Stevenson who had beaten him to a good cross from Aston.

In the 63rd minute it looked as if Husband would equalise when he chased a through ball from Ron Fletcher through a ragged Burnley defence, but with only Stevenson to beat he shot over the top.

A free-kick from Collins caught Luton on the wrong foot, and Paul Fletcher, who had again been playing some cool stuff, hacked the ball

The verdict...

LUTON put up one helluva fight at Turf Moor this afternoon and were dreadfully unlucky not to get something out of this match.

They controlled much of the second half and pushed forward with great authority, but the wheel of fortune swung against them.

The cruellest blow was half way through the second half when, with Luton controlling the game, centre-half Faulkner smashed a shot against the Burnley crossbar.

After half time, Anderson and West had both gone close, and before the break Aston and Jimmy Ryan were unlucky not to score.

Burnley's goal came from Ingham, wearing the No 12 shirt, but playing in midfield, in the 33rd minute. He nipped straight through the middle of the Luton defence to beat Horn with a clever little shot. But Luton should have allowed him to get it in.

Husband missed a glorious chance in the 63rd minute having been put through by Ron Fletcher. West, playing against his old club, was about the best midfielder player on the field.

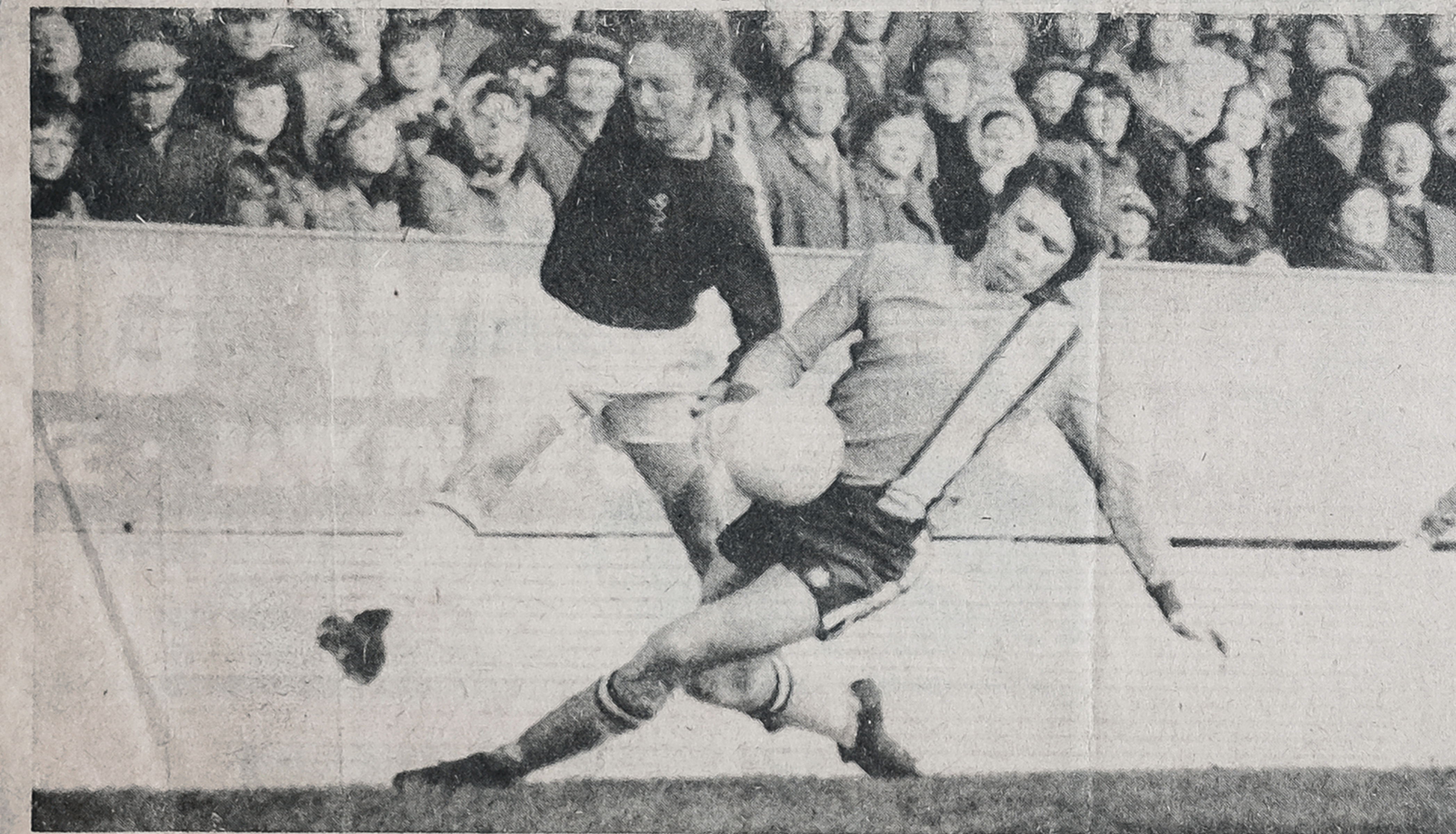
Unfortunately Ron Fletcher collected his fifth booking of the season for going in with his feet up against goalkeeper Stevenson.

On several occasions it was the positional stuff and agility of Stevenson that kept Burnley in the game, and Luton were far from disgraced and must still fancy their chances of fighting their way out of trouble.

Both West and Faulkner were also booked and this could put Luton in some difficulty later in the season.

behind for a corner. In the 73rd minute Fletcher missed an easy chance in front of goal when he missed the ball instead of heading in.

In the 76th minute Faulkner hit the Burnley crossbar with a tremendous shot that had Stevenson well beaten.



Ingham gets a cross in for Burnley as West challenges