

CLIFFHANGER FOR HATTERS

TREMENDOUS pressure from Luton in the second half against Sheffield United this afternoon gave them the equaliser they so deserved.

Even the home fans jeered United as they reeled under the Town's piledriving attack.

Peter Anderson was the Hatters' hero, and his difficult shot into the Sheffield net sent his team home tired — but happier.

Yesterday's heavy rain had eased up overnight and Luton were greeted with a beautiful day within the hills of Sheffield for the latest of their survival battles this afternoon.

They were unchanged for their trip to Bramall Lane where they lost 2-0 in the League Cup earlier in the season.

Luton began full of confidence and after some midfield exchanges John Aston was sent away on the left, and after going the easy way past Goulding he measured a centre for Ron Futcher, but the Luton Centre-forward tried to beat his man before shooting and the move was snuffed.

But Luton did not give up easily and Faulkner was right up with the attack as the Town went forward again to challenge a long through ball from Paul Futcher.

It was his brother Ron who fell back to head clear Sheffield's first attack and Jim Ryan gave assistance with a thoughtfully thumped clearance.

In the fourth minute Sheffield centre-forward Dearden missed a sitter. Woodward went down the right and put the ball on the spot for the United centre forward to score.

But Horn hurled himself at the feet of Dearden who was flustered into shooting wide.

This was a real break for the Town who could not afford to go down at this early stage.

After Goulding had put a long centre inches over the Luton crossbar, the Town hit back a strong run from Husband ended with the ball

being crossed, and both Ron Futcher and Faulkner missed in their attempts to steer the ball into the net.

This could so easily have given Luton the lead they were seeking.

Faulkner continued to press forward and after goalkeeper Brown had fisted the ball off his forehead, Buckley had a strong shot caught by the Sheffield goalkeeper.

But it was not all Luton, and Woodward cut in again from the right and saw a hard shot bounce off Horn's chest, but Anderson was on the spot to clear.

United kept up the pressure and a splendid cross from Bradford was flicked away by Horn, and Buckley painfully stopped a hard shot from Woodward that looked on its way for the net.

Jim Ryan and Anderson played some intelligent football and with Faulkner still pushing forward, Luton looked just as good as the more secure Sheffield side. But what they wanted was a goal.

After Dearden had got goal side of Paul Futcher, he slid the ball out to Woodward and again Horn was called upon to make an opportune save — this time with his feet.

In the 26th minute Luton were desperately unlucky not to go ahead. A powerful shot from West from the edge of

the box looked to have caught Brown unawares, but he leaped backwards to tip it over the bar at the last minute.

The first goal came not surprisingly from Woodward who had looked dangerous from the start. A bad mistake by Faulkner let the winger in, and cutting in from the right he beat Horn with a low shot from inside the penalty area.

A couple of minutes later Woodward nearly nipped another when he shot from long range, but this time Horn was alert to the danger and he fell backwards to tip the shot over the bar.

After 37 minutes it was that man Woodward again who almost scored for Sheffield. After a probing ball into the middle by Bradford, he took the ball on his left foot and banged it into the side of the net.

There was still plenty of fire in Luton and a clever shot by Anderson was saved, and then Husband crossed the ball just behind the crossbar after another good build up.

West was having a fine game in midfield for Luton, and was prominent in every move as they strived to equalise before the half-time whistle. But seconds before it blew, John Ryan shot wide.

HT: 1-0

Still full of beans, Luton hurled themselves into the second half with a strong attack from the left, but a

MATCH DETAILS	
SHEFFIELD UNITED: Brown, Goulding, Hemsley, Speight, Colquhoun, Franks, Woodward, Bradford, Dearden, Currie, Field. Sub: Nicholl.	
LUTON TOWN: Horn, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Futcher, Jim Ryan, Husband, Ron Futcher, West, Aston. Sub: Thomson.	
REFEREE: Mr G. Hill (Leicester).	
WOODWARD (Sheffield) in 28 minutes.	
ANDERSON (Luton) in 80 minutes	
ATTENDANCE: 17,356	

cross from West was battered clear.

Some trickery by Jimmy Ryan ended with Johy Ryan smacking the ball high into the goalmouth, but Brown was rather lucky to fist the ball clear.

And then another strong attack ended with Husband pushing the ball back to John Ryan who skidded a shot wide.

Luton continued to play with spirit and another great run by West was spoiled when Aston was offside to take his pass.

Another splendid move between Jimmy Ryan, John Ryan and Faulkner ended with Ron Futcher being tackled before he could shoot from the left of the goal.

Hemsley was the defender who spoiled Luton's hopes, but they got another corner immediately and Brown made a lucky save to a brilliant swerving shot from the outside of John Aston's left boot.

After a Currie free kick had been blocked by the Luton defence, the Town roared back on to the attack and Jimmy Ryan crossed cleverly for Anderson to put the ball back into the goalmouth where Aston was unlucky not to score.

Another fine run by West was spoiled when his good cross was cleared hastily and banged for a corner by Franks.

The home crowd began to hurl abuse at their team as Luton showed them what attacking football was all about. But they still couldn't score.

More great work by Luton's man of the match West came to nothing when a terrific shot by Anderson was blocked.

Sheffield's best player Woodward calmed things by opening the Luton defence to supply Dearden with a cross from which he should have scored. Horn made a good save.

Luton again pushed forward and a splendid shot from Ron Futcher was tipped round for a corner by Brown, but it was the old story and whenever they looked just like scoring, Luton lost possession and had to fall back.

More tremendous football between Jimmy Ryan and Aston gave Luton another chance, but the ball whizzed across the knees of Ron Futcher in front of the goal and another chance was gone.

The goal came at long last from Anderson. And it was no surprise. Luton had played some brilliant football and a low shot from Husband flummoxed the Sheffield defence, and Anderson put the ball into the net from a narrow angle on the right.

The
verdict...

IT looked as if it was going to be Burnley all over again. Luton played Sheffield off the park at Bramall Lane this afternoon, but they didn't equalise until ten minutes from time.

And when the goal came it was Anderson who put it in, but Luton could have had three or four as they tore the Yorkshire side to bits in a thrilling second half.

For my money Alan West was Man of the Match. He drove Luton forward and had they had somebody up front who could sort the job out, the result would have been sorted out far earlier in the game.

Late in the game Speight missed a good chance to score Sheffield's winner, but it would have been a severe injustice had his shot gone in.

Sheffield owned only a small portion of the match, and during that time Woodward put them ahead with a fine shot after a defensive mistake.

It looked as if Luton were going to pay for this mistake, but their sheer guts and flair saw them through.

Paul Futcher, celebrating his call-up to the England training squad, had a fine game in defence as did John Ryan.



Graham Horn punches clear for Luton as Sheffield attack