

HATTERS ARE SHUNTED OUT OF CUP

75/76 (FLC)

BEFORE yesterday all they were celebrating in Darlington was the 150th anniversary of steam locomotion. Last night the lowly lads from the rail town shunted Luton out of the League Cup at the second round junction.

And the locals went mad. Before the match everything about the little Feethams ground resembled the Wheeltappers and Shunters' Club. Afterwards, it was like the finale of last night at the Proms.

Silly things happen in cup-ties. But don't get me wrong — the Fourth Division side fully deserved their success.

Luton were swept aside on a wave of passion and Northern grit. And they didn't know what to do about it.

Like the lads from the railway club in the television programme, Darlington put all their pies on the table.

Hustled

As the announcer came up with: "We would like to thank the people who went to Sheffield in the last round..." outside the ground they sold hot pork pies and pease pudding sandwiches.

The match began in a silvery sunset which nullified the effect of the dim floodlights. And the crowd sang Blaydon Races.

With Luton still trying to adjust to their surrounds, the sheer weight of the 6,600 crowd smashed through a wooden fence behind the popular goal. It was one of those nights.

Darlington chased and hustled. And Luton goalkeeper Keith Barber was called upon to make two saves from eventual match-winner Stan Webb.

But Luton weathered both the driving rain and the local euphoria and when Ron Futcher put them ahead with a great individual goal three minutes before the break it looked as if they had beaten the local conditions.

But in the end justice was done and the efforts of the little club paid off. Luton's lucky lead was cancelled out by Webb in the 62nd minute

Darlington 2, Luton Town 1

By ROGER DUCKWORTH

when centre-half Smith's break upfield was stopped by a Spiring tackle and the ball ran free for the centre-forward to blast home.

Six minutes later Webb headed in a left-wing free-kick following a foul by John Ryan, and Darlington erupted. It was a nice-looking goal — but where was John Faulkner?

From then on the gods looked after the underdogs. Even Luton's late flurry in which Spiring had an effort kicked off the line was not good enough.

Underdogs

Luton lost this game in midfield. While all did good things individually, Anderson, Chambers and King were never really on top as a team.

King was taken off for Jimmy Ryan to have a go. He looked sharp, but by then — the 74th minute — Luton had gone.

Paul Futcher and Faulkner tried their best to keep things on an even keel but the fervour of the Fourth Division side was too much.

Ron Futcher and Steve Buckley were booked for indiscretions, and Ron, who was Luton's best forward, usually found himself well patrolled on the break.

Only good goalkeeping from Barber prevented Luton from being further embarrassed.

In the later stages with Aston getting the beating of Nattress, a local hero, it looked as if Luton might salvage a replay.

But nothing ran for them and even with John Ryan and Buckley trying to overlap it looked a lost cause.

Credit

After their good showing in the League this was a terrible performance, and afterwards the players admitted their shortcomings.

Even so manager Harry Haslam managed to keep his spirits up. "We'll just have to take it out of Bolton on Saturday," he said.

"These are always bad games to play. But I don't take any credit from Darlington. They played well. The lads were sick but I told them to get changed, have a drink and a meal and to forget it.

"It's not the end of the world. Promotion will do for me."

Mr Haslam warned Bolton to watch out on Saturday. The Luton team are in no mood for messing about.

Darlington: Ogley, Nattress, Cochrane, Cattrell, Smith, Blant, Holbrook, Sinclair, Webb, Crossan, Young. Sub: Rowles.

Luton: Barber, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Futcher, King (Jim Ryan 74 mins), Spiring, Ron Futcher, Chambers, Aston.