

HATTERS GET THE JITTERS

75/76

LUTON, favourites with the bookmakers to win promotion to the First Division, crashed to their first home defeat of the season at Kenilworth Road this afternoon.

Their conquerors were Bolton who showed last week when they beat Southampton 3-0 to knock them off the top of the table, that this season they mean business.

And yet the Hatters can consider themselves unlucky because, apart from two lapses, when Paul Futcher headed past his own goalkeeper and Curran was allowed space to shot, the pressure had come from them.

After all the adverse publicity Luton have had this week, because of that charge down the pitch by the Chelsea fans a fortnight ago, there seemed very little danger of trouble this afternoon.

In fact the ground was only half full when the teams ran out. And the Bobbers stand was only a quarter filled.

Luton were again without skipper Alan West who is recovering from a shoulder injury and who was playing for the reserves at Norwich this afternoon.

His place was taken by the long serving Jimmy Ryan who came back into the side for his first League match of the season.

Out went Peter Spiring to make way for the return of Adrian Alston who missed the League Cup tie at Darlington during the week and Brian Chambers, who had played in the previous two matches was named as substitute.

Former Manchester United full-back Tony Dunne had to drop out of the Bolton side because of a stomach upset which hit him during the night. His place was taken by Peter Nicholson with Taylor coming in as substitute.

Even so there were some well-known faces in the Bolton line-up, including those of forwards Hugh Curran and Peter Thompson, the former England and Liverpool winger.

Bolton nearly scored straight from the kick-off. That wily old campaigner Thompson

Luton 0 Bolton 2
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

took the Luton defence on down the left wing, gave the ball to Nicholson, who crossed, and John Byrom, who used to top the scoring lists, put in a fine shot that Barber did well to turn round for a corner.

By this time both ends of the ground had filled considerably but there were still a lot of gaps in the Bobbers stand.

A great deal of effort by Ron Futcher won Luton a throw deep in the Bolton half but Anderson was caught offside and he won himself a little cheer for retrieving the ball for the opposition and leaving it for the defender to take the free-kick.

A good move between Alston and Jim Ryan ended with Nicholson giving Luton another throw but Alston was overenthusiastic and fouled the Bolton full-back in an effort to make room for himself and again Luton's chance of an early lead was gone.

An intelligent move sparked by Jim Ryan from midfield and carried on by Alston again came to grief when Ron Futcher was caught — offside.

There was no backing away by Ron Futcher who was being subjected to some rugged tackles. This was most admirable for the lad had three stitches in his shin after the game at Darlington on Tuesday.

Luton were full of bright ideas but both Ron Futcher and Alston were caught offside as they tried to steal that extra yard that makes all the difference.

A sparkling run by Aston along the left touchline left full-back Ritson stranded. Centre-half Allardyce missed the cross but Ron Futcher, who got in a shot, had to watch a deflection move with irritating slowness to a Bolton defender.

Mistake

It is unusual for John Ryan to concede a corner when attempting a back pass. But after being forced into such a rare mistake, Thompson put his corner into the side netting at the Oak Road end.

Aston next turned up on the Luton right wing but he could not get cleanly past Nicholson and his well-intended centre went straight to goalkeeper Siddall.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON TOWN: Barber, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Futcher, King, Alston, Ron Futcher, Jim Ryan, Aston. Sub: Chambers.

BOLTON: Siddall, Ritson, Nicholson, Paul Jones, Allardyce, Greaves, Byrom, Curran, Garry Jones, Reid, Thompson. Sub: Taylor.

REFEREE: Mr K. Burns (Stourbridge).

GOALS: Paul Futcher (og) 38 min Curran (Bolton) 72 min

Att: 11,217

In the 20th minute King beat Bolton's off-side trap and was desperately unlucky when his clever chip was just caught by Siddall at full stretch.

An ironic cheer went up from the Luton fans when Bolton centre forward Garry Jones was caught off-side. There had been just so much of it at the other end.

After I had been hit by the ball in the Press Box, by a desperate clearance from Paul Futcher, Bolton full back Nicholson went close with a shot from the resulting throw in.



PAUL FUTCHER

Some good work by Alston, in which he had a shot blocked, came to nothing when Anderson miss-hit the rebound from a good position on the edge of the box.

Andy King received a painful injury in the abdominal region when he was accidentally kicked by Siddall as he tried to control a ball on the edge of the box.

Jimmy Ryan and Alston might have picked up a goal when Anderson took a quick corner but they were closed upon by some four defenders in the goalmouth and again Luton's hopes were dashed.

But right against the run of play, Luton went behind in the 38th minute. Curran crossed from the left and Byrom, Paul Futcher and goalkeeper Barber all went up for the cross. And it looked as if the ball bounced into the net off the head of FUTCHER as Barber tried to fist it clear.

Both Curran and Faulkner were hurt in a clash of heads. Faulkner was the first up, looking fairly angry about his lot, and when Curran eventually got on his feet he looked decidedly wobbly.

HT: 0-1

In a chase for a long ball, Jimmy Ryan was injured in a collision with goalkeeper Siddall. And he didn't even get to the ball which went over the line for a goal kick.

The natives began to get restive as Luton failed to put anything constructive together at the beginning of the second half but at last there were some cheers when Alston put Aston through on the left and he won a corner.

From Jimmy Ryan's flag kick, Anderson headed back into the goalmouth and Faulkner had an effort kicked off the line.

In the 61st minute Allardyce was booked for pulling Luton down and from Buckley's free-kick, Ron Futcher back-headed over the Bolton crossbar.

Ron Futcher again put in tremendous effort to get in two shots as he was tackled by two defenders but again both were blocked.

Ron Futcher was spoken to when he caught goalkeeper Siddall as he followed through. But, thinking back, the referee never said anything to the goalkeeper when he did a similar thing against Andy King in the first half.

Then Bolton centre-forward Garry Jones was booked for dissent after a colleague had fouled King.

After further time wasting by Bolton's defensive wall, Jimmy Ryan was eventually allowed to push a free-kick to Buckley. But the full-back's shot at goal, from some 30 yards, was over the top.

A good run by John Ryan produced a cross for which Ron Futcher challenged but a brave tackle by Paul Jones resulted in the Bolton centre-half needing treatment from the trainer.

Luton got a corner out of it, but Siddall made a fine catch and again the Town attack was frustrated.

After yet another Jimmy Ryan corner had been knocked across the goalmouth, this time by Siddall, Faulkner shot wide from a position to the right of the goal.

Ron Futcher looked to have escaped with a through ball, but Paul Jones was too quick and tackled back to concede a corner but to ruin any Luton hopes of a shot at goal.

Luton's hopes took a further dive in the 72nd minute when a clever ball was flicked into space from the left for CURRAN to chase and he ade the job look easy by blasting a low shot into the net past Barber.

THE DUCKWORTH MATCH VERDICT

LUTON ran up against a brick wall at Kenilworth Road this afternoon. A brick wall in the shape of four huge Bolton defenders.

All their attacking ideas were snuffed out without ceremony by the lads from Lancashire who must surely be good bets for honours later this season.

There were instances especially in the first half, when Luton still full of hope, might have scored.

But as the game progressed they got scarcer and scarcer. Bolton turned round a goal up after a rare mistake by Paul Futcher had diverted the ball into his own goal.

And in the second half, every time Luton tried something bright, they were snuffed out by a hard tackling defence that gave no quarter but looked solid in the extreme.

When Hugh Curran darted through in the 72nd minute to slam in Bolton's second goal, Luton had had it. Their attack had never really been in command and there were deficiencies in midfield which will need looking at.



Apart from his fatal error, I thought Paul Futcher played well in defence and in midfield King had plenty to ideas, enthusiasm and courage.

And there was no shortage of effort from Ron Futcher and Alston. But it must have been like battering their heads against a stone wall.

Aston never really exploited right-back Ritson and a lot of Luton's abortive efforts came from moves through the middle. But in the end former England Youth goalkeeper, Siddall, seemed to be in complete command of everything that came his way.

There were a flurry of bookings for Bolton men, Allardyce, Nicholson and Garry Jones.

But the Luton crowd was heading for the exits long before the final whistle.