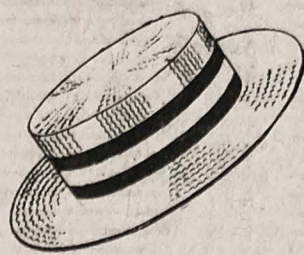


BOLD LUTON SUNK BY BLACKPOOL

THE
DUCKWORTH
VERDICT



TWICE Luton went ahead. Twice they were pulled back. But this match played in the face of an Irish Sea gale was always a thriller.

Luton played some marvellous stuff. This week full marks must go to the midfield department who were always superior to their seaside counterparts.

As early as the fifth minute, Luton went ahead when Anderson smashed in a goal that must have been one of the easiest of his life and from then on, Luton tried to provide the entertainment.

But as often happens in this sort of situation, unless you can get another goal, the other side gets one first. Five minutes before half-time Hart equalised from a Suddick corner.

Some marvellous footwork by Seasman provided Spiring with Luton's second goal, but it was the corner business that let Luton down again.

From a flag kick in the 73rd minute, Suddaby banged in Blackpool's second equaliser and the thrills continued. Luton looked to have the job sewn up but six minutes from the end, Walsh smashed in the winner from a right wing cross and not even Barber, who had a magnificent match could prevent it.

Luton came home the long way tonight. On a coach oiled on disappointment after a game which they looked to have won.

In the first half Alston played some tremendous stuff but again it was midfield skipper Alan West who provided the power for Luton's near victory this afternoon.

With nine minutes to go the Town sent on Brian Chambers as substitute for Seasman.

In the 52nd minute SPIRING headed Luton into the lead for the second time. It was a brave goal and he collected a clout on the head on the way, but most of the credit must go to Seasman who laid on a real bit of magic to go past the Blackpool defence before laying on the cross.

Soon afterwards Blackpool's Ronson was booked for a foul on Fletcher which ended with the Luton defender and Ainscow having a scuffle.

Then it was Barber's turn to get into the game again. He made a marvellous catch to a cross from Suddick that looked a goal all the way as Ainscow bored in.

Luton were full of bright ideas but they always seemed to run into trouble as they approached the penalty box. But everybody on the Luton side was playing well.

Further good work by West was nullified when John Ryan stubbed his toe as he went to make the final shot.

Luton had another promising attack ruined when Jimmy Ryan fell short on strength with a pass out to John Ryan on the right. Before this there had been some good passes to string together Luton's ambitions.

In the 71st minute Barber made the most fantastic save of the match when he somehow tipped over a sliced shot from Buckley that looked to be going into the net.

From the corner, Barber made another brilliant save to Hart but from the second corner, he was eventually beaten and SUDDABY knocked the ball into the net.

Luton could hardly believe their bad luck when Ainscow went wide on the right, knocked over a cross and WALSH banged in Blackpool's 84th minute winner.

GOAL-HUNGRY Luton towered over Blackpool for much of their Bloomfield Road clash and looked en route to end their five week run without a win, but it was not to be.

Boldly following manager Harry Haslam's call to keep attacking, Luton got off to a great start with a goal from Peter Anderson after only five minutes which sent the hopes of the Hatters fans soaring.

Blackpool equalised before the interval but Peter Spiring put Luton ahead again — only to see Blackpool draw level then grab the winner in the 84th minute. It was a crushing blow to the visitors.

Manager Harry Haslam has been wrestling with his conscience all week and yesterday he took the decision to drop centre-forward Ronnie Fletcher and bring back lanky Adrian Alston who is also searching for his best form.

And Jimmy Husband, who has scored twice in his last two matches, had to step down because of an injury and Peter Spiring was brought back into the side at centre-forward.

This gave Luton a front three of Alston, Spiring and young John Seasman who is looking after John Aston's No. 11 shirt — and doing it quite well.

Peter Anderson started Luton's approach work with a good looking run through the middle but he was upended by Hatton and looked in some pain. But he was able to continue and Buckley pushed the free-kick to John Ryan who shot from some 30 yards into the sparse crowd.

Some good midfield work by West brought Luton an early goal. Alston turned on some of his trickery on the edge of the box and his shot was blocked. But with Seasman charging in, ANDERSON took control, calmly collected the ball in the goalmouth and lashed it into the net.

After their recent per-

BLACKPOOL 3 LUTON TOWN 2
ROGER DUCKWORTH reports
from Bloomfield Road

formances, this was just the start that Luton were looking for. And it was a reward for their policy of attacking — even though they were away from home.

Peter Anderson again went near to a booking for arguing with the referee after a foul decision had been given against him. Faulkner had to pull him away from a conversation with referee Nolan. Luckily for Luton, Blackpool's free-kick went straight out of play behind the Tower End goal.

After the wind had beaten the Blackpool defence, Spiring took a chance and shot from about 30 yards. He completely took the defence by surprise — and the goalkeeper — but his effort went a couple of yards wide.

In the 18th minute Suddick beat Barber with one tremendous shot but he was offside when he received the ball and

Blackpool had to swallow their pride.

A couple of minutes later, Ainscow ended an impressive Blackpool build-up with a hard shot that Barber did well to knock over the bar. But like his predecessor, Ainscow was given offside.

Luton were giving everything and, for a spell, their midfield department was in complete control. Another good move almost brought a breakaway goal for Seasman but he too was caught offside after going round goalkeeper Wood.

A foul on Ainscow by Paul Fletcher gave Blackpool a free-kick just to the right of their penalty area, but they could make nothing of it and it was knocked away quite easily by the Luton defence.

Luton looked far the better side in the first half and with Anderson doing some good

MATCH DETAILS

BLACKPOOL: Wood, Curtis, Bentley, Hart, Suddaby, Hatton, Ronson, Suddick, Walsh, Ainscow, Harrison. Sub: Betts.

LUTON TOWN: Barber, John Ryan, Buckley, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher, Jimmy Ryan, Alston, Spiring, West, Seasman. Sub: Chambers.

Referee: Mr G. Nolan (Manchester).

ANDERSON (Luton) 5 min.

HART (Blackpool) 40 min

SPIRING (Luton) 52 min

SUDDABY (Blackpool) 73 min

WALSH (Blackpool) 84 min

Attendance 7,854

stuff in midfield, Blackpool were made to look very ordinary indeed.

In the 32nd minute, Jim Ryan was unlucky not to score when he chased a headed pass from Alston into the penalty box and looped a shot just over the top.

After Jimmy Ryan had had his shirt pulled by Hart, he kept going but was unlucky to have a free kick given against him in a tussle with the same player after he had escaped.

A couple of minutes later, Barber pulled off a marvellous save at the feet of Hart after the big Blackpool midfielder man had looked as if he was going past the Luton goalkeeper.

Blackpool tried hard to get back into the game and a hard shot from Ainscow cannoned off Buckley's head to safety. Luton were still looking the better side.

But in the 40th minute Blackpool drew level following a Suddick corner. The ball was headed at goal by Suddaby and HART rose to deflect the ball into the net.

Anderson tried to hit back, but a move involving Jim Ryan and Seasman ended with the ball bobbling as he hit it and he shot wide.

HT: 1-1

After a tremendous effort by West in midfield, the ball was shunted across the Blackpool penalty area before John Ryan put in a terrific shot that went just wide.

Then it was Blackpool's turn with a centre from Suddick being headed into Barber's arms by Bentley.

Again Luton's midfield trio did a load of good work to engineer an opening. John Ryan again supplied the cross, but Spiring did not have the height to do anything with it in the goalthouh.