

THE DUCKWORTH VERDICT

POP GO LUTON... IN 60 SECONDS

LUTON were completely outplayed this afternoon. They lacked both ideas and urgency and never looked like scoring.

They managed to hang on until half-time but went down when Sunderland scored two goals in a minute early in the second half.

That was the killer. But to be honest, the match belonged to Sunderland from start to finish and Luton manager Harry Haslam will have to think yet again how to get a forward line that clicks.

John Aston came back this afternoon but was far from his best having missed five matches and he had to be replaced by King in the second half.

There were mistakes in the defence and, had they accepted their chances, Sunderland could easily have had four goals.

Luton will have to do better than this if they are to climb once again into the top half of the Second Division and have any sort of chance at all of that much talked about promotion.

Former Luton forward Vic Halom had a fair game for Sunderland but Luton's Brian Chambers, who used to play at Roker, could not fulfil his promise to score on his return.

JUST a minute . . . that's all it took to beat Luton this afternoon. They came home pointless

Bobby Kerr set the ball rolling when he blasted a free kick past Barber in the 55th minute. pop Robson popped in No 2 in the 56th minute — and it was all over.

Barber failed to hold a cross and Robson was very happy to push the ball home from the rebound. Minutes later he missed an open goal after Porterfield foxed a depressed defence.

Luton made two changes, bringing back John Seaman and John Aston in place of Peter Spiring and Ron Fletcher. This meant Peter Anderson, although wearing the No 4 shirt, was expected to play an attacking game.

Sunderland were without Joe Bolton, who suffered a serious leg injury in training on Thursday and they brought in young Jack Ashurst at left back. That was the only change in the home line-up.

The Hatters faced the stiff task of trying to upset Sunderland's 100 per cent home record. And former Town striker Vic Halom led the Roker attack against his old side.

Today's game was televised by BBC cameras for Match of the Day tonight.

It was quite a day for Luton's Brian Chambers who returned to the ground where he made 100 league appearances in his seven-year spell.

In the first minute Paul Fletcher very nearly gave Sunderland a bright start. The Luton sweeper was slow moving on to the ball and Towers nipped in sharply to smack a fierce shot just wide of the post.

Luton's first shot came from Chambers after five minutes. He smacked the ball firmly

**Sunderland 2
Luton Town 0
By ROGER DUCKWORTH**

from just outside the box but it was caught, somewhat unconvincingly, by Montgomery. It was Chambers again who tried to get the attack moving, but his pass to Anderson ended with a bad header which went straight to the Sunderland centre half.

Barber's good form seemed to be continuing when he went up high — under pressure from Halom — to catch cleanly after Ashurst started a good move from the left.

Then Hughes headed wide of the pressured Luton goal following a neat free kick from Kerr. The Hatters tried to get back into the game but

SPORTS FLASH

■ **Bryan Hamilton put Ipswich ahead after 17 minutes at Manchester City.**

when a John Ryan free kick was headed on by Chambers and Anderson nobody was there to follow it up.

Then Halom had a good chance but was given off-side before failing with an attempted lob over Barber.

A dodgy back pass by John Ryan almost had Barber in trouble. He had to come out

MATCH DETAILS

Sunderland: Montgomery, Malone, Ashurst, Towers, Clarke, Moncur, Kerr, Hughes, Halom, Robson, Porterfield. Sub: Holden.

Luton Town: Barber, John Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Faulkner, Paul Fletcher, Jim Ryan, Chambers, Seaman, West, Aston. Sub: King.

Referee: Mr C. Seel (Carlisle).

KERR 55

ATTENDANCE: 28,338

quickly to snatch the ball from Halom's feet and received a knock in the process.

With Halom, Hughes and Kerr buzzing well, play in the first 20 minutes tended to be in the Luton half. In fact the Town found it difficult to go forward, and on several occasions defenders were robbed of the ball as they tried to set something up.

Halom, after starting one move from midfield with a long ball out to the left, made enough ground to get on the end of Ashurst's centre. But he could get no power into his header.

Barber pulled off a fine catch at full stretch to a corner from Kerr, with the Luton goalmouth under real pressure.

And with Halom charging in again Barber did well to fist another clever Kerr corner over the crossbar. Luton looked far from happy in the first half hour. Some work from Anderson and West sent Aston away for a break on the left. But he took the ball out of play before crossing for Jimmy Ryan — who headed wide anyway.

A good ball from Anderson put Jimmy Ryan free on the right but his cross was headed out and again Luton were back-peddalling and looking for ideas in attack.

ROBSON GOAL CLINCHES IT AT ROKER

The referee allowed quite a lot of niggling to go on before having a word with Halom for a foul on Chambers. Sunderland looked more likely to score and a good free kick from Kerr brought a header from Hughes which bounced past the far post.

More good play by Halom set up a chance for Kerr, but again Barber was well up to the shot and made a diving save to keep Luton in the game.

There was an ugly incident when Seaman was accidentally kicked in the face by Towers. Jimmy Ryan was quick to react by running at the Sunderland player and pushing him in the chest. The referee was in quickly to sort things out, and had a word with Ryan. Seaman was able to continue after treatment.

Luton's first corner came in the 44th minute, but it was cleared and it took a last-ditch tackle by John Ryan to stop Hughes going clear.

HT: Sunderland 0, Luton 0

SPORTS FLASH

■ **Hereford's biggest crowd of the season was present for match with Peterborough to see Terry Paine break the League record with his 765th appearance.**

There was a bit of a laugh at half time when Sunderland switched on the floodlights. They were absolutely unnecessary . . . with brilliant sunshine flooding the ground. Obviously somebody thought the game needed brightening up. They were dead right.

Just after the restart Jimmy Ryan was booked for a foul on Halom.

From Kerr's free kick Robson shot over the top wasting a splendid chance to

end the stalemate. The ref penalised Montgomery for taking more than four steps with the ball and from the free kick, inside the box, Aston hit the defensive wall.

Jimmy Ryan won a corner from the incident, but it was wasted. A long free kick from John Ryan was fiercely

SPORTS FLASH

■ **Frank Stapleton gave Arsenal a 15th minute lead against Middlesbrough.**

challenged by Faulkner. But Montgomery managed to catch it and again there was nothing for Luton.

The deadlock was broken ten minutes after half-time. Kerr beat Barber with a terrific free-kick from a yard outside the penalty box after a foul by Faulkner. Straight from the kick-off Sunderland came again and after Barber had failed to catch a cross, the ball bounced out invitingly to Robson who scored with a low shot from close in.

Four minutes later Robson missed an open goal from right in front after a pass from Porterfield bamboozled the Luton defence.

In the 65th minute Andy King went on as substitute for John Aston, obviously not at his best after recent injury.

Luton had another escape when a shot from Porterfield was deflected past Barber on to a post by Robson. Fortunately for Luton it bounced out of play. And then an overhead

SPORTS FLASH

■ **Ralph Coates, a last-minute choice, put Spurs ahead after seven minutes at Leicester. Six minutes later, Keith Weller equalised.**

shot by Halom was well saved by Barber.

As Luton continued to struggle both Robson and Halom went close for Sunderland.

And after further aggression by the home side, John Ryan was forced to head over his own crossbar for safety.