

WHAT A ROT TEN DRAW

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Luton Town 2, Blackburn Rovers 0
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

THE DRAW for the fourth round could have been kinder to Luton, much kinder. Norwich or Rochdale away is hardly something to look forward to with glee and anticipation.

If they go to Rochdale they are on a hiding to nothing with virtually no brass to bring back from the small Lancashire club's attendance.

If they go to Norwich they face a hard, uncompro-

missing match against a side struggling to establish itself, without much conviction, as a First Division force.

But the great thing is that they are through. With seven wins in a millionaire (for Luton) row of success, there was almost as much excitement about the draw as there was in Saturday's match.

The Luton people watched it in the Kenilworth Suite. The Blackburn people didn't bother, preferring an early coach back north to lick their wounds and consider their battle against relegation.

Luton manager Harry

Haslam stood in a corner cracking jokes and muttering that he'd like Manchester United or Liverpool away — for financial reasons.

After each home team was drawn there was an expectant hush, and a sigh of relief when Luton's name was not paired with them.

And there was a great moan when it came up: "Norwich City or Rochdale . . . versus . . . pause . . . Luton Town."

Hard work

But as I say, at least they're through. They live to fight again. And that great run of wins stretches further and further.

Let us say from the outset that Luton were far from bright and breezy winners

on Saturday. They made hard work of it, and the amazing thing was that Blackburn let them play their normal attacking game.

Last time Rovers came here — in September — they were so dull and defensive that their manager Jim Smith apologised for them. On Saturday, they played with two wingers, Jimmy Mullen and Bobby Hoy, and they had almost as many chances as Luton.

For 20 minutes or so Luton were bad. They couldn't put a pass right, players in possession ran into trouble, players off the ball found themselves in bad positions.

The crowd pleaded for a bit more thought, a bit more care. Try as they might, the team struggled

No luck for Luton after Cup struggle

to provide the sort of flowing, aggressive soccer that they have been serving up for weeks now.

Why it happens nobody knows. Said Mr Haslam afterwards: "I knew it would happen sooner or later. And I knew it would be in a match like this. People thought Blackburn were going to be a push-over."

Still, it came right in the end. After a goalless first half in which Blackburn might have sneaked a goal or two, Luton emerged as the better side.

Andy King and Brian Chambers share the man-of-the-match tag for their graft, skill, determination and the outstanding parts both played in both goals.

King started them both.

The first came in the 70th minute when, with a run from deep in his own half, he found Chambers with a superb pass.

Chambers beat his man with a body-swerve which would have graced Nureyev, and goalkeeper Roger Jones could only knock a powerful shot into the air.

Ron Futchler followed up

to volley it into the net. Afterwards, coach Roy McCrohan said: "I'm delighted Ron scored that one that way. We had been practising rebounds all week. It was harder to score than it looked."

Six minutes later it was that chirpy, effervescent teenager King, who looks set for an outstanding career, behind a second goal. This time he was out on the right touchline. He beat two men in a close dribble, pushed the ball through the ruck, jumped over another scything tackle and went clear.

He passed the ball to Chambers, who beat two men with more twists of his hips, and lobbed the ball into the net with apparent ease from a difficult situation.

It is something at which

he is a master, and the third time this year he has scored such a goal.

How grateful Luton were for it on Saturday. Blackburn were just looking as if they were going to pull one back themselves. It came at just the right time.

In addition to King and Chambers, West had another good match in midfield, while Paul Futchler and Buckley were outstanding in defence.

Aston was brought more into the game later on, and it began to tell. But in attack there was plenty of running and effort from Jimmy Husband and Ron Futchler.

This victory will certainly perk Luton for their trip to Bolton on Saturday — possibly their hardest remaining match this season.

MATCH DETAILS

LUTON

Barber, John Ryan, Buckley, Chambers, Faulkner, Paul Futchler, Husband, King, Ron Futchler, West, Aston. Sub: Paul Price.

BLACKBURN

Jones, Heaton, Wood, Metcalfe, Waddington, Fazackerley, Hoy, Oates, Mullen, Svarc, Parkes. Sub: Wilkinson.

GOALS RON FUTCHLER in the 70th minute
CHAMBERS in the 76th minute

ATTENDANCE: 11,195



LEFT, Brian Chambers, caught between two Blackburn defenders, turns away after his shot had beaten the keeper for Luton's second goal. Above, Jimmy Husband congratulates Andy King, but the 'goal' was disallowed for offside.