

# THE VERDICT

■ I hope Luton get a good draw in the next round. For whoever they meet they are not likely to be beaten in their current form. Today they made it seven wins on the trot — and did not play well in the process.

■ If they can play like this and win, there is nobody going to beat them when they are playing really well again. For the first 20 minutes Luton were terrible. Their bad passing and poor control on an uneven pitch made Blackburn look far better than they really are.

■ Then, before half-time, King looked to have scored but was ruled offside. This signalled the turning point in Luton's make up. They began to look their old capable selves again and knocked the ball around with more confidence.

■ Even so Blackburn showed bags of spirit early in the second half but they were gradually worn down by the midfield skills of Chambers, King and West. And when Aston, Husband and Ron Futcher began to buzz, it became increasingly obvious that Luton would win.

■ Chambers was involved in both Luton's goals. It was from his shot that Ron Futcher followed up to score the first and he knocked the second in himself following some real grit and determination from West.

■ I thought Paul Futcher had a good game in the Luton defence and now that Luton have got seven successive wins behind them they will go north to Bolton next week with the sort of confidence they need for one of their most difficult matches of the season.

■ Once Luton had got on top and scored a couple of goals, they began to look just as efficient and ambitious as they have in recent weeks in their league programme.

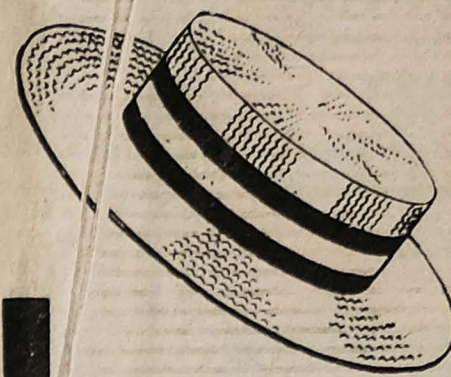


ABOVE: West bursts through for Luton

BELOW: Blackburn head away as King closes in



# MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, HATTERS!



75/76  
(FAC)

**THE HATTERS** made sure of a place in the Fourth Round of the FA Cup this afternoon with two goals in six minutes.

After a shaky start Luton delighted the Kenilworth Road crowd with goals in the 70th and 76th minutes from Ron Futcher and Brian Chambers.

It was just not Blackburn's day. They fought desperately but in the end they went under — and Luton had chalked their seventh successive win.

Luton were having their first look at FA Cup football this season — and there was a poor old gate for this afternoon's third round tie against the Rovers.

The Bobbers' Stand was virtually empty, apart from the usual stalwarts who sit in the centre under the clock. And there was even worse news to follow.

With six league wins behind them Luton were full of confidence and probably glad of today's diversion from the domestic programme. On the other hand Blackburn, wearing the blue and white shirts famous in football since the turn of the century, were desperate for success.

Luton manager Harry Haslam made one late alteration to his plan when he included Paul Price as substitute. The No 12 is just getting over two broken legs and is considered to be on the verge of a regular first team spot.

The Hatters' passing was poor in the early minutes and the diminutive Hoy took advantage of this with a couple of good runs for the Rovers. But Paul Futcher and Faulkner were on hand both times.

Luton continued to be at sixes and sevens and Buckley and West made mistakes as they tried to cover for the Futchers and Faulkner.

As Blackburn fought their way forward there were more scares in Luton's defence,

**Luton Town 2  
Blackburn Rovers 0**  
By  
**ROGER DUCKWORTH**

with John Ryan and Paul Futcher just about coming out with honour.

A free kick on the left, taken by Aston, produced Luton's first full blooded attempt at goal. His centre was headed over the top by Ron Futcher. A minute later Futcher tried again.

The ball bobbed awkwardly for him as he shot but Jones was forced into a difficult diving save.

## ROVERS FANS 2 HOURS LATE

**TWO** hundred Blackburn supporters reached Luton two hours late this afternoon after their train was held up by storm damage on the 200-mile trip from Lancashire. The football special reached Luton at 4pm. One supporter said: "We're all pretty fed up but all we want to do is to get to the ground to see what is left of the game."

The first time the tricky Aston took on Heaton at speed, the full back came out best — he ran in front of the Luton man to risk of obstruction which never came.

Husband was next to catch the miss-kicking disease and the Luton fans tried to gee up the side which has been playing so well in recent weeks. The first sign that

things were about to go right for the Hatters came when King made a good run through the middle. But he was eventually stopped by a good tackle from Waddington.

In the 12th minute Blackburn missed a great chance to go ahead when a cross from Heaton left Mullen with a clear header. But he nodded it wide and then held his head in his hands. It really was one he should have scored.

When the Rovers came to Kenilworth Road for a league match in September they played so defensively that manager Jim Smith had to apologise later. It was a

different story today with Blackburn doing all the probing in the early stages.

A free-kick for Blackburn just outside the penalty box, after an unintentional handling offence by Chambers, sent Barber the wrong way because of a deflection. But the luck was still with Luton and the ball went just wide of the right hand post.

After Luton built a promising attack, the ball bounced badly for Chambers. An overhead clearance by a defender was chased hard by Svarc and Barber caught a hard shot from Parkes after Rovers chased the full length of the field.

After a good run by Buckley, the ball went out to King who got in a hard cross which Ron Futcher went up for but again had his header blocked.

The goal Luton struggled so hard to find came in the 70th minute. A good break from midfield by King sent Chambers through to chase a lovely pass.

He went round his man with a clever body swerve before firing in a hard shot. Jones was able only to knock the ball up in the air and Ron Futcher followed up to knock the ball into an empty net on the volley.

Luton made sure of success when Chambers scored a brilliant second goal. It was carved by the sheer determination of Andy King who beat the hacking legs of three defenders over on the touchline to supply the pass.

Chambers took the ball in his stride, sold two more tremendous dummies and clipped the ball over the head of Jones for one of his characteristic goals. A minute later Aston nearly beat Jones with a hard, low free kick.

Aggression by West and Aston provided King with the chance of a cross which he banged over hard. Unluckily for Luton it was just too high for Ron Futcher who jumped well. Luton allowed Blackburn far too much space in midfield and gave away the ball with bad clearances.

And when they did get a chance for a shot at goal by way of a Buckley free kick the full back put it painfully wide.

In the 31st minute Buckley fired in a tremendous shot which was parried by Jones and went straight to King who whacked it into the net. The linesman's flag went up immediately. As the ball came back off the keeper one can only imagine that King was in an off-side position before Buckley shot.

Luton managed a period of some ten minutes in which they really looked as if they would score. But when Blackburn got a grip again the scoresheet was still clean.

Falkner, Aston and Ron Futcher were involved in more hard work for Luton, and then John Ryan looked to have a hard shot on target before it was knocked over the top by Ron Futcher who tried to deflect it past Jones.

John Ryan found West with a lovely pass out to the left but again Jones made a good stop to the low shot. And try as he might, Ron Futcher could not get to the rebound.

Blackburn weathered the storm again and at the other end Svarc had a short shot deflected for a corner by Barber following a good cross from the left.

### HT: Luton 0, Blackburn 0

The second half began with Blackburn again going forward and Svarc won a corner off Faulkner. Then came some industry from Mullen, and Ryan and Paul Futcher had to make difficult clearances.

Ryan was again caught with a high ball and Mullen went round easily before Futcher came across to sort the job out.

There was a sympathetic cheer when a handful of Blackburn fans drifted into the ground with the second half five minutes old. They arrived in time to see Hoy being treated for a leg injury.

A couple of minutes later Barber made two fine saves. He fell backwards to tip over a header from Svarc. Then he dived forward to catch Mullen's corner against his chest.

A bad tackle from behind by Wood on the breakaway Ron Futcher didn't even bring Luton a free-kick.

In the 57th minute clever turning in the box by Aston provided West with a marvellous chance. To the disbelief of Luton fans he shot wide.

Then it was Blackburn's turn again and a good pass from Mullen sent Parkes through to fire in a hard shot from the right which went just wide of Barber's goal.

## MATCH DETAILS

### LUTON

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

### BLACKBURN

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

REFEREE Mr B. Daniels (Essex)

### GOALS

RON FUTCHER in the 70th minute CHAMBERS in the 76th minute

ATTENDANCE: 11,195