



● Ron Futcher, back to the camera, knocks in the second goal, with Sunderland goalkeeper Montgomery stranded, far right, by Jim Husband, in the background.

PERSISTENCE AND HARD WORK BRINGS ITS REWARD

AFTER WATCHING persistence and determination bring its rewards, in the shape of two points well won from promotion candidates Sunderland, Town fans gave their team an ovation as they walked off the Kenilworth Road pitch.

For Sunderland had been trounced even more positively than the score-line suggests.

They came looking for a draw, choosing to play a 4-1-2 formation. The Town, with John Aston ruled out by a knee injury, were forced into a similar formation—but they made it work so much better, with more accurate passing, more direct running, and more men prepared to make runs off the ball to open up gaps.

It needed a lucky goal for the first breakthrough, but once that went in, after 65 minutes, the Town looked much more like First Division class than Sunderland did.

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 2, SUNDERLAND 0

Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Barbers: Ryan, Buckley, Faulkner, Paul Futcher; Chambers, King, West, Fucillo; Husband, Ron Futcher. Substitute: Price, not needed.

SUNDERLAND: Montgomery; Malone, Bolton, Clarke, Moncur; Towers, Kerr, Ashurst, Robson, Holden, Finney (Greenwood 73).

THE GOALS: Bobby Moncur diverted mis-hit shot by Jim Husband into his own net, 65 minutes; Ron Futcher, 85 minutes, after he, Chambers and Husband combined to spreadeagle Sunderland's defence.

REFEREE: Les Haynes, Doncaster; programme note said he had handled "important local matches." Pity he didn't on Saturday.

ATTENDANCE: 15,338 — best at Kenilworth Road since Chelsea's visit in August, and only Bolton's gate on Saturday was higher in the Second Division.

ENTERTAINMENT: Value for money — the sort of soccer to keep turnstiles clicking.

There were still some failings in front of goal, with Ron Futcher, back after missing two games through suspension, trying a little too hard at times to make his shots count.

All those who screamed abuse at him might bear in mind the pathetic performance of Sunderland's centre-forward, Mel Holden.

He cost them £120,000 from Preston, and with John Faulkner always on top of him he spent an unhappy 90 minutes. He might as well have stayed on the bench for all the danger he was allowed to create.

By contrast, Futcher took

a lot of stick from defenders, and still came up smiling, collecting the Town's second goal to compensate for some atrocious misses earlier on.

Chances were created regularly throughout the game, and Jim Husband had a dream of a match. Always a worker, he was in tantalising form on and off the ball, and Sunderland's defence he moved towards them.

Not far behind was Lil Fucillo, still young and inexperienced, but learning fast with every game.

The Town's tactics called for Futcher and Husband to take the weight up front, with midfield men breaking forward fast to give support.

It worked well, with Fucillo the most effective man coming through, losing his

28-2-76 3228

Report by Brian Swain Pictures by Ron Purves

marker regularly, feeding accurate passes to attackers, and joining in the shooting match as well.

But Sunderland had their chances: Holden lumbered through the centre on his own in the second minute before firing wide to waste a good opportunity, and soon afterwards Barber made his only error in 90 minutes when he failed to reach a corner from Towers. Faulkner rescued the Town with a header over his own bar.

Paul Futcher covered immaculately, and John Ryan and Steve Buckley were

seldom beaten on the flanks.

But it looked for a long time as though the Town would be robbed of victory by the familiar shortage of good finishing.

Ron Futcher headed wide from a cross by Alan West, then shot wide after the Sunderland rearguard had been carved open by a neat move involving Brian Chambers and Husband.

Husband and Fucillo made another opening which Ron Futcher wasted by shooting weakly at Montgomery.

Sunderland's attack was much less persistent, and Tom Finney's return was not as happy as it might have been, although he twice forced Barber to make good saves to keep the scoresheet blank.

Fucillo hammered a low shot narrowly wide from another pass by Husband,

but Sunderland finally fell behind when Husband moved on to a through-ball from Andy King. He mis-hit a lobbed shot towards the far post, and as Montgomery moved to his left to cover, Bobby Moncur got in the way and diverted the ball with his thigh past Montgomery's right hand.

Ron Futcher netted from a pass by Chambers, but was ruled offside, and Sunderland nearly grabbed an equaliser when £140,000 Roy Greenwood, sent on as substitute for Finney, turned quickly and scooped the ball over the bar.

Sunderland were never worth a point, and the killer goal five minutes from time was a beauty. Chambers started it with an intelligent pass from midfield.

Ron Futcher fed Husband, and with the defence hopelessly disorganised, Montgomery chose to race out of his goal. Husband's shot was deflected by the goalkeeper, but was still heading for the net until Ron Futcher stormed through to make certain from close range.

Lottery winners

THE FRIENDS OF Luton Town's first lottery produced a £500 windfall for Bobbers Stand season ticket holder Jim McAllister on Saturday. He bought the winning ticket, 10991.

A total of 35 winning numbers were drawn out. Their owners can claim their prizes by producing the ticket to the Luton Town pools office, at the top of Kenilworth Road, or by writing to the Secretary, Friends of Luton Town, c/o Luton Town F.C.

If your ticket didn't win, don't throw it away yet: any unclaimed prizes will be re-drawn.

The tickets which have won £100 each are 08404 and 07332. The two £50 winners are 19308 and 15784. Prizes of £10 each go to tickets numbered 20500, 02292, 03393, 14203, 20115, 17348, 17634, 10969, 17415 and 13209.

The 55 winners are: 20330, 12186, 12085, 12530, 15238, 15171, 07424, 15481, 15183, 19188, 18688, 02100, 19135, 14241, 18200, 09266, 08826, 04242, 04243, and 18516.



● Ron Futcher slams in the "goal" that was disallowed for offside.