

AINSCOW'S WINNER IS A GEM

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by TONY QUESTED

BLACKPOOL paralysed Luton in the second half of their pulsating top-table battle at Bloomfield-road this afternoon.

They ripped into Luton, with Trevor Finnigan the substitute coming on early in the second half, and peppered Luton goal and should have sewn the game up.

Billy Ronson and Alan Ainscow scored superb goals after Blackpool had quickly gone behind to bring about an incredible reversal considering Luton's early dominance.

But the features of this tremendous game were a magnificent display by Paul Hart in midfield and by Mickey Walsh up front and Stan McEwan in defence.

There were other stars, like Ainscow and Ronson and Suddaby in this tremendous second-half turnabout by Blackpool.

Luton could have sewn the game up after their early dominance but could have no complaints after being run into the ground for the rest of the game.

Before the kick-off Bob Hatton, the Blackpool striker, was presented with a crate of whisky — his second of the season — by J and B Whiskey for the "Prize" which he scored against Cardiff. His first one was against Orient.

With a lot of Luton fans making the journey North to take in the match and the illuminations, there were some rowdy scenes on the Kop and a number of the more unruly ones were ejected by the police before the game started.

Blackpool had Paul Gardiner back after a month with injury and he replaced the suspended Steve Harrison.

Luton were also unchanged.

THE TEAMS

BLACKPOOL	LUTON
1 Ward	1 Aleksic
2 Gardner	2 Price
3 Milligan	3 Buckley
4 Hart	4 West
5 McEwan	5 Faulkner
6 Suddaby	6 Futeher (P)
7 Ronson	7 Husband
8 Ainscow	8 Hill
9 Walsh	9 Futeher (R)
10 Hatton	10 Fucillo
11 Weston	11 Boersma
12 Finnigan	12 Heale

Referee: T Mills (Barnsley)

Luton started brilliantly and Ron Futeher surged past three men into the box but his shot for the far corner of the net was deflected for a corner.

Luton continued to press but Blackpool broke away and Ronson's shot was deflected for a corner. Hatton won a second corner as Blackpool, kicking towards the Kop, found some rhythm.

On a fine sunny day conditions were good and Blackpool started to tick. Price cleared off the line after Walsh had made the goalkeeper drop a cross, and Ronson had a 40-yarder saved by the diving Aleksic.

Luton powered back and Blackpool were wide open in the eighth minute when West centred from the left and HUSBAND rose unmarked to head home.

Blackpool were continually cut open but managed to get in a shot from Ainscow which went over the bar.

Blackpool pressed strongly for an equaliser and after winning another corner the goalkeeper dropped a cross, as he had done with others, and the ball was hacked off the line again.

Hatton and Walsh swapped passes in a superb move with Hatton shooting an inch or two wide.

Blackpool thought they had equalised after 18 minutes when Walsh was waiting to hammer the ball into the net after Aleksic dropped Suddaby's cross as Hart thundered into him. But as Hart received treatment the effort was disallowed for a foul by him.

Luton went close with another Futeher shot and Ward tipped over the bar a centre from Fucillo as Luton again called the tune.

Luton were murdering Blackpool with slick football that made the Seasiders look cumbersome. They always had a spare man and were quicker to the ball and Blackpool were slow in defence.

It was some surprise when Blackpool produced a moment of magic after 26 minutes, thanks largely to Hart. He surged through from midfield, picked up a return pass from Walsh and slotted the ball through, despite pressure from a defender, and RONSON slammed a magnificent left footer into the corner of the net.

A minute later Walsh, who was playing well, thrashed a cross low into the area but the ball went just behind Hatton in front of the goal.

A couple of promising Blackpool raids turned to corners but Blackpool looked in trouble again when Luton



HUSBAND (Luton)	min sec
RONSON (Blackpool)	24
AINSCOW (Blackpool)	75

attacked down the right. Milligan is the most active but made amends with a superb tackle on Fucillo who seemed certain to score after an unlucky deflection from Suddaby's clearance gave him a clear shot at goal with 35 minutes gone.

The referee had to check some over-zealous tackles from both sides but this was a blood and guts encounter and by this time Blackpool had just about got on terms with Luton's thrifful play.

Paul Futeher sent a raking 40-yarder just over the Blackpool bar after a throw-in. Ronson was playing brilliantly but Milligan almost gave away another goal by lack of concentration and poor control. Luckily McEwan was in quickly to tackle Ron Futeher as he prepared to rattle in Luton's second.

Weston made an awful hash of a clear chance when he sliced his volley after a Milligan cross had only been half cleared, but in his defence he had to hit it first time. It was a fine build-up by Blackpool, notably Milligan.

A cross from Gardner dropped nicely for Hatton but he did not realise the position of the ball and a defender was able to hack clear before Hatton could recover his composure.

Blackpool could have gone

The gate:
12,167

ahead soon after the restart when Hart won a corner after a fine ball from Walsh down the line. Weston's corner to the near post was flicked back by Walsh whose header hit the bar and lobbed out to Suddaby. Suddaby did not get hold of his shot and the left footer was cleared.

Hatton would have been clear from half way with the Luton defence pushed right up but Ronson played a bad pass, delaying it and catching Hatton off side.

Another misake by Milligan almost conceded a second Luton goal on half time. A back pass was never, on with Milligan under pressure from Ron Futeher, but he played it back and Ward could not hold it, but with Futeher bearing down on goal Suddaby lunged in with another excellent tackle and Blackpool breathed again.

Half-time: Blackpool 1, Luton 1.

Hill was clean through after beating McEwan and Suddaby but McEwan recovered to save the day.

Hart had a header saved low down by Aleksic after a good Blackpool move.

Luton should have scored when Hill sent Husband clear. He cut inside the full back but completely fluffed a left foot shot which sliced way off beam.

Blackpool started stringing it together and Hatton was just unable to reach Walsh's diving header.

Hart went to head a cross and missed the ball which fell behind Walsh but he managed to turn and get in a shot which was just wide.

Blackpool brought on Trevor Finnigan after 57 minutes in place of Milligan who was limping and Weston moved to full back.

Blackpool turned on the heat with Aleksic saving at



Mickey Walsh leaps out of the way as Billy Ronson's 25yd shot skims past him to beat Luton 'keeper Aleksic to score for Blackpool, in the afternoon's match at Bloomfield-road.

Hart's feet after a fine pass by Walsh.

Four Blackpool players had chances to score in the same move created by Ronson. Hatton was kept out, Ronson had a shot blocked with perhaps the clearest of the chances. Walsh's drive was blocked and Finnigan smashed in a shot which was also cleared.

Blackpool took the lead after 75 minutes with his superb goal by AINSCOW, his first of the season. McEwan broke brilliantly and Hart did as well to find Ronson who slipped a fine pass to Ainscow on the left of the box completely clear. Ainscow picked his spot with a shot Kenny Dalglish would have treasured, throwing the ball at Ronson. Ron Futeher was booked for after a tackle by the Blackpool player.

Result:
BLACKPOOL 2,
LUTON 1



A flying pile-driver by Mickey Walsh in this afternoon's match at Bloomfield-road against Luton, finds the back of the net but the goal is disallowed because of a foul by Hart on the Luton 'keeper seconds before.