

# JOE'S CRACKER RESCUES SORRY SUNDERLAND

SUNDERLAND 1, LUTON 1.

(Half-time—0-1.)

77/78

Scorers:—Sunderland—Bolton (54 min.); Luton—Fletcher (43).

**J**OE BOLTON doesn't make a habit of scoring goals. But when he does they generally fall into the spectacular or vital category. The one the full-back got in this affair qualifies on both accounts!

The game was just nine minutes into the second period when the ball was cleared by the Luton defence following a Sunderland corner. Harmless the situation appeared as Bolton latched on to it—but not for long.

Moving a few paces forward the youngster let rip with his "wrong" right foot to send a screaming drive that never got off the grass, home at Aleksic's left-hand post from 25 yards.

Spectacular—and vital!

It came just in time to spare the Weirsiders a load of blushes and save a precious point as they attempt to make a steady climb back towards justifying their pre-season rating as favourites for promotion.

But, even though that counter helped the Roker men hold on to an unbeaten run that now stretches to seven games, I doubt if they will have taken little else of comfort from the game.

True late on, they set up a barrage of pressure on the visiting defence, but even then they never really came any closer than an Ashurst header, which was ruled out for off-side.

The game, in fact, had slipped from their control long before that. Particular first half, when Luton, positive and controlled in all

## By Alan Clifford

departments, always looked the more likely of the two outfits.

With West taking a firm grip of midfield and supplying a steady stream of service to his front men, the visitors gave the Roker defence a torrid time.

Never more than when Husband's delicate chip over the advancing Siddall rebounded off the bar and tantalisingly dropped over the head of the incoming Fletcher.

But if the blond striker was thwarted on that occasion, he was bang on the spot minutes before the break to stroke the ball home after Price's shot from outside the box had been blocked.

Luton were well worth that interval lead. Indeed, with just a shade more luck, they may well have been in the happy position of not

having to drop a point to that Bolton face-saver.

No, not a happy day for Sunderland. Recent results obviously suggest they can play a lot better. But if promotion is to be the prize, they can't afford many more uninspiring performances like this—especially at home.

Crowd—26,915.

Sunderland — Siddall; Henderson, Bolton, Kerr, Elliott, Ashurst, Rostron, Arnott, Greenwood, Holden, Rowell.

Luton—Aleksic; Price, Buckley, West, Faulkner, McNichol, Husband, Hill, Fletcher, Fucillo, Carr.

Referee — J. Wrennell, Ecclestone.