

ROSTRON GOAL GIVES HOPE

Sunderland's Mick Docherty, on the attack is brought down by this tackle from Luton's Brian Stein on the edge of the penalty area, but the following free kick was cleared by the Luton defence.

By FRANK JOHNSON 79/80

BOTH Sunderland manager Billy Elliott and chief coach Ken Knighton made a plea to the fans before this afternoon's home game against Luton: "Give the lads a cheer."

For, as the promotion battle hotted up both men were worried about Sunderland's nervousness at Roker Park, and crowd support was essential.

They felt that if the supporters got behind the side there was a great chance of the Roker men collecting a maximum of ten points from their remaining home matches.

Sunderland, after their brilliant 1-0 victory at Stoke in midweek, were unchanged. Their new signing, Steve Whitworth, who cost £175,000 from Leicester City last weekend, was making his home debut.

There was a big cheer just before the game for injured striker Gary Rowell who made a presentation to the lucky winner of the Sunderland AFC lottery.

Rowell, out for the rest of the season with a knee injury received in the last home game against Orient, took his place in the stand and was intent of cheering his colleagues on.

After the torrential rain in midweek, Roker Park was in its usual immaculate condition, and it looked as though there would be a good crowd for a game which Sunderland had to win to complete a double over Luton.

The visitors had two new faces in their side, Alan Birchenall, signed on a free transfer from Blackburn just before the deadline, and central defender Masters, on loan from Southampton.

Sunderland lost the toss before a crowd of more than 20,000 and were set to attack the Fullwell end.

Whitworth got an early cheer for intercepting a pass down the left, and then Docherty put a good ball through to Entwistle and it was taken off his toes by full back Price.

Luton came forward to win a free kick just outside the Sunderland penalty area after a foul by Buckley on Hutton, a but Elliott cleared comfortably.

Rostron then put a promising ball up to Entwistle and new man Birchenall cleared. The crowd were giving Sunderland a lot of help early

The line-up

SUNDERLAND	LUTON
1 Siddall	1 Findlay
2 Whitworth	2 Stephens
3 Bolton	3 Price
4 Docherty	4 Donaghy
5 Clarke	5 Masters
6 Elliott	6 Birchenall
7 Chisholm	7 Hill
8 Rostron	8 West
9 Entwistle	9 Taylor
10 Buckley	10 Hutton
11 Lee	11 Stein
12 Brown	12 Carr
Referee: Mr J. B. Worral	
(Warrington)	

on though there was not much goalmouth activity to cheer about.

Centre-half Masters fouled Entwistle as he went up for a high ball and play was held up while Joe Bolton received treatment for an injury sustained in an earlier tackle.

And Roker Park went deathly quiet in the fifth minute when the young full back was helped off the field with an injury to his right leg.

It was obviously serious as Sunderland brought on substitute Alan Brown in the seventh minute.

This was a blow for the Roker men who had to reorganise and Rostron went to left back.

There were roars of disapproval when the referee whistled up Lee for a foul on Birchenall after the Sunderland man seemed to take the ball cleanly in the tackle.

Sunderland had a chance to snatch the lead in the ninth minute. Buckley, taking the ball from defence, flighted a beautiful 30-yard pass to send Brown clear, down, the young striker, from only eight yards, blasted his right-foot shot wide of the left hand post.

A shot on target must have put Sunderland in front.

A long ball from Rostron won Sunderland a throw near the left corner flag, but Brown lost possession.

Docherty then put another throughball on to Brown, and Stephens did well to get back and lift the ball into



SUNDERLAND

the arms of his goalkeeper.

Lee made a mess of things in Sunderland's defence and Rostron, who came to the rescue, earned applause.

Sunderland were pushing hard now and after a goalmouth scramble, Whitworth had a 20-yard header taken under the bar by Findlay.

There was a narrow escape in the 20th minute for Luton when Brown, taking the ball on the right hand side of the penalty area fired in a hard, the line.

It was a scappy game in the first half-hour, but West ball over dangerously for Price, jumping high to send a glancing header well wide.

Luton forced a corner on the left and West put the low centre which eluded Findlay and Stein cleared off the line.

Sunderland built up well, but Luton packed their defence and when a spinning ball came out to Whitworth 25 yards from goal, he tried a first-time half-volley which went wide.

Luton were beginning to push forward more often, and there was an anxious moment for Sunderland when Taylor got in a powerful shot which Clarke did well to block.

Then Siddall had to go diving across to hold a flicked centre from Taylor with Stein running in menacingly at the far post.

But Sunderland, anxious to please the fans, built up on the left and a centre from Docherty was headed narrow-

ly wide by Brown and Entwistle, racing in, didn't have the speed to catch the ball before it ran out of play.

Clarke had to relieve pressure with a back-pass and Sunderland were still finding it very hard to get going.

A header by Elliott was knocked forward by Entwistle, but it was just too strong for Brown. The ball was knocked back to Findlay, but Brown continued his run, colliding with the goalkeeper.

The game was held up for three minutes while Findlay, obviously dazed, had treatment.

The goalkeeper was quickly in action when play resumed, having to take a high centre from the left from Clarke.

Then Elliott was unhappy about being pulled up for a foul on Stein midway inside the Sunderland half, but justice was done when Hill's free kick went behind.

Whitworth supporting on the right, was obstructed in trying to take a short pass from Lee.

The ex-England man clipped the ball up towards Elliott, at the far post, but

Half-time
Sunderland 0, Luton Town 0
The news at half-time was that Bolton had a severe groin injury.

Luton were first to ttrack with stein feeding the ball forward to West whose strong shot was charged

down on the edge of the penalty area.

Sunderland had an escape in the 47th minute when Hill, clear on the right, centred and Stein headed the ball in only to see the offside flag raised against him.

Luton were still pressing, and a hard centre from Stephens on the right struck Stein on the back of the legs.

A foul by Elliott on Stein, 30 yards out, brought a free kick from Hill which Chisholm headed away.

Sunderland had never got going in the game and they ere still struggling to put their passes together with any conviction.

The roker forwards were bunching in the middle and there was not a lot for them to go for from midfield.

But Chisholm did bring a roar a en e ried a break, but his 20-yard right-foot shot went well wide.

There was another promising Luton attack with the buildup on the left and Hall cleverly brought the ball down with his right foot before hitting his shot with his left from 20 yards in the 55th minute and Siddall did well to save on the line.

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Sunderland had a chance to break into the Luton penalty area when Buckley put over a promising centre from the left, but Lee, attempting to bring the ball down, failed to control it and a shooting chance was lost.

In the 56th minute Luton brought on substitute Carr for Hutton.

It was still a very disjointed performance by Sunderland, yet the crowd were still trying to give the home players what encouragement it could.

There was danger when Rostron went chasing after a through-ball, but he knocked it too far in front of him as he broke into the Luton penalty area and Findlay moved smartly to take it.

A foul on Entwistle by Masters gave Sunderland a free kick on the right and Chisholm headed wide from Whitworth's centre.

A bad foul by Taylor on Elliott, bursting forward, brought a warning from the referee and Sunderland a free kick 25 yards out.

Whitworth's centre was headed goalwards by Lee and Entwistle attempting a volley from 12 yards skied his right-foot shot over the bar.

But Sunderland got the goal they needed so desperately in the 69th minute through ROSTRON.

It was a good, five-man build up ending with Buckley centreing from the right and Chisholm heading across goal to leave Rostron with a clear shooting chance from 12 yards out, and he made no mistake sending his right-foot shot out of the reach of Findlay.

Then came the chance of a break by Brown after a first-time through-ball from Chisholm, but the youngster couldn't control it quickly enough and Masters ran across his path to fire the ball out for a corner.

Buckley took the corner and when it was headed goalwards Brown, only six yards out, put his right-foot volley ver the bar.

Attendance 23,358.
FINAL:
SUNDERLAND 1
LUTON TOWN 0