SPORT AND MOTORING

SUNDERLAND SWAMPED IN SECOND HALF

LUTON TOWN 4
SUNDERLAND 1
(Half time 0-0)

WHEN the Town get on top of a side, they're as dangerous as any team in the First Division. That was Alan Durban's summing up on Saturday after his Sunderland outfit was swamped in the second half at Kenilworth Road.

While the Town and their fans were more than happy with a 4-1 win Durban pointed out that the Sunderland defence had contributed generously.

He blamed his goalkeeper for the first goal, and the third was a spectacular own goal at a time when Sunderland showed signs of forcing their way back into the game.

DESERVED TO WIN

On the run of play the Town, adventurous and entertaining without quite hitting the heights of their 3-0 win at Leicester in midweek, deserved to open the home campaign with a win.

The supporters enjoyed it all, with a threatened pitch invasion never materialising. David Pleat's plea in his Luton News column last week, to leave his players out of the Milton Keynes row, was answered positively as the customers realised this was too good a performance to interrupt.

The first half, however, had been below par, with the Town finding Sunderland's rugged defence difficult to penetrate. Gordon Chisholm made biting tackles on Paul Walsh and Brian Stein, and paid the price for one when he tripped Stein to give the Town a 30th-minute penalty.

KEEPER SAVES PENALTY

But Stein's spot kick was a little short of pace. Chris Turner dived low to his left to make a save and Kirk Stephens rammed the rebound over the bar.

David Moss turned the game the Town's way after the break, with old-fashioned wing play and a stream of good crosses.

The second half was only 54 seconds old when Moss laid on the first goal, with considerable assistance by Walsh. The goalkeeper and Walsh went up together for a centre by Moss. The forward's challenge prevented Turner from making a catch, and Ricky Hill slammd the loose ball into the net for his second goal of the season. ,

Brian Horton's short forward pass gave Walsh the chance for a solo run which took him past two men to score the Town's second, but they were jolted by a swift counter-attack when Paul Atkinson raced down Sunderland's left wing and Colin West was unmarked to reduce the deficit to one goal.

GIFT ENDS REVIVAL

Just briefly Sunderland looked capable of saving something from the game, but three minutes after West's boost full-back Iain Munro lobbed a spectacular 25-yard own goal.

At the time the Town manager was thinking of injecting more life into his attack by sending on sub Trevor Aylott for his first appearance of the season.

He was told to warm up on the touchline, and let Stein see him. The answer from the pitch could not have been more emphatic—Moss produced another perfect cross in the 76th minute and Stein showed the old finishing touch to head the Town's fourth and make the rest of the game a formality.

THE MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Sealey; Stephens, Elliott, Donaghy, Turner; Hill, Horton, Bunn; Stein, Walsh, Moss. Sub: Aylott, not needed.

SUNDERLAND: Turner; Venison, Atkins, Chisholm, Munro; Elliott, Proctor, Pickering, Atkinson; Rowell, West. Sub: James, not used.

THE GOALS: Hill 46 mins, Walsh 58 mins, West for Sunderland 67 mins, Munro own goal for the Town 70 mins, Stein 76 mins.

OTHER STRIKES: Town ten saved, including a penalty, and 12 wide. Sunderland five saved and six off target. Corners: 9-5 to the Town.

REFEREE: Ray Lewis, Great Bookham. Missed seeing Turner move early to save Stein's penalty.

ATTENDANCE: 10,846—only Notts County's was lower on Saturday, but last season's Sunderland figure was only 400 higher.

BOOKINGS: Venison and Elliott of Sunderland and Paul Walsh, all for fouls. Walsh could have been sent off for a retaliatory kick at Venison.

ENTERTAINMENT: Sparkling in the second half when the Town looked bright.

● **SUPER-SHARP: Brian Stein on target for the first of his two goals this week. He is on the extreme left, powering in a header to complete Saturday's 4-1 victory over Sunderland.**