

ROKER REALLY GO TO TOWN!

By PAUL CHESTER

GORDON CHISHOLM and Nick Pickering grabbed their first goals of the season as **Sunderland** achieved their biggest win so far in an encouraging start to the campaign.

Those goals from defenders underlined Sunderland's commitment to attack in a match when they could have doubled their tally.

Yet Roker goalkeeper Chris Turner had important saves to make and skipper, Shaun Elliott, again played well — this time in front of England manager Bobby Robson — shows the Roker side didn't have all their own way in an entertaining game.

But there was no denying Sunderland's right to the three points as they bounced back from last week's narrow defeat at Arsenal — a setback which halted an unbeaten nine-game run.

This generally was an impressive all-round team display with midfielder Mark Proctor taking the eye in a Sunderland side which

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had a solid look about it. A pulsating first half could have brought goals galore — yet it produced only one.

The score came in the 16th minute, after Donaghy had been harshly penalised for a foul on Hodgson.

Proctor's quickly-taken free kick found Daniel, whose cross was headed down by Pickering. The ball bounced awkwardly for Proctor, but dropped invitingly for Chisholm to strike a low left foot shot past Findlay, from 12 yards.

Close

Earlier, Wylde and Atkinson had gone close for Sunderland, Steve Elliott, had shot inches wide for Luton and Donaghy had headed wide at the near post, when he looked like giving the visitors the lead.

Steve Elliott — a cousin of Sunderland's Shaun — failed to connect when well positioned to meet a Hilaire cross before Luton had a double escape in the 26th minute.

Wylde found Berry with a delightful pass and the midfielder beat Paul Elliott to leave himself in the clear, but his right foot drive was blocked by Findlay.

Gayle, however, seized on the loose ball and his low cross led to Atkinson having a left foot drive cleared off the line by Thomas.

Findlay denied Wylde with a brilliant save and Thomas was booked for a foul on Gayle, before Luton came again with a flurry of attacks.



Nicking in to score! Nick Pickering follows up a Howard Gayle shot, that the keeper was unable to hold, to score his first goal of the season, and Sunderland's third.

Turner saved expertly from his own teammate, Chisholm, who deflected a Hilaire cross, then pounced on a low shot from Parker.

While the second half didn't reach the exciting heights of the first, it did bring more goals for Sunderland.

In the 53rd minute a slick Sunderland attack involving Wylde and Gayle led to Atkinson striking a low left foot shot which Findlay couldn't hold.

Gayle latched on to the rebound and was immediately brought down by Thomas. Wylde confidently converted the penalty with a clean right-foot drive, high to the keeper's right.

Gayle, for blatantly obstructing Bunn, and Hodgson, for throwing the ball away after a free kick, went into referee's Hough's notebook midway through a half in which Luton desperately needed a goal to give them hope.

But the closest the visitors came to it was in the 64th minute, when a

dangerous Thomas cross forced Chisholm to head against the top of his own bar and behind for a corner as Paul Elliott attempted to nod it in from close range.

Effectively, it was Luton's last hope because Pickering made it 3-0 in the 76th minute.

Once again, Findlay stopped but failed to hold a shot — this time from Gayle — and Pickering was the quickest to react, driving the ball in with his left foot.

Top Man:
Sunderland — Mark Proctor
Luton Town — Mall Donaghy

SUNDERLAND: Turner (C), Daniel, Pickering, Berry, Chisholm, Elliott (Shaun), Gayle, Wylde, Atkinson, Proctor, Hodgson. Sub. West.

LUTON TOWN: Findlay, Thomas, Turner (W), Parker, Elliott (P), Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Elliott (Steve), Bunn, Hilaire. Sub. Breaker.

Referee: Mr. J. Hough (Cheshire).