

DON DELIVERS, BUT NORMAN BLOWS IT

SUNDERLAND were unchanged for the crucial relegation clash with Luton Town at Roker Park today.

Skipper Kevin Ball, substituted in Monday's defeat at Grimsby, recovered from a knee injury to keep his place in the starting line-up.

But Anton Rogan, who took over at Blundell Park, made way for the return of Peter Davenport on the bench.

Luton were without suspended Ceri Hughes. The Welsh under-21 international was replaced in midfield by Jason Rees.

Sunderland began attacking the Roker End with a strong breeze at their backs. In the opening seconds Gray let fly from a long way out, only for his effort to finish well off target.

Luton were clearly intent

SUNDERLAND: Norman, Kay, M Gray, Owers, Butcher, Ball, Cunningham, Goodman, Harford, Atkinson, Armstrong
Subs: Davenport, Colquhoun
LUTON: Chamberlain, Dreyer, Telfer, Johnson, James, Peake, Rees, Kamara, Dixon, P Gray, Preece
Subs: Oakes, Williams
Referee: Steven Bell (Huddersfield)

on a shoot-on-sight policy. Gray chested the ball down and played it into the path of Telfer, whose fierce low drive tested Norman.

Atkinson lost possession



GEOFF STOREY
REPORTS

Cunnington's shot was blocked, the ball fell kindly to Goodman, but he was caught well offside.

Gray was impeded by James after the youngster had worked his way past Telfer. When Gray floated the free kick towards the edge of the penalty area, Harford was penalised for a push on Telfer.

Goodman knocked down a pass from Cunningham

and Harford was rather ambitious with a 35-yard drive that finished well wide.

Harford did well to keep the ball in play when Kamara tried to put it behind. He played it back to Butcher, who failed to get any power behind his shot and presented Chamberlain with an easy catch.

Sunderland were soon back, with Goodman breaking clear. He made the by-line before pulling the ball back to Harford, whose first-time effort was only just off target.

An Owers shot was deflected behind.

The corner was only half cleared, but when Kay played the back ball in, Butcher failed to keep his shot down and the ball flew just over the bar.

It was all Sunderland at this stage, with the crowd firmly behind them. But Norman had to be alert and dive out at the feet of Gray to prevent the Luton striker from latching on to a through ball.

Norman sportingly cleared the ball into touch to allow Johnson to receive treatment after a challenge by Cunningham.

Play was delayed for three minutes and the Luton defender was clearly struggling.

Cunnington released Goodman with a superb pass. But Sunderland's leading scorer lost control in his haste to head for goal and was unable to prevent the ball running behind for a goal kick.

Dixon headed on a long throw-in from the left and it took a first-time clearance from Ball to end the danger.

When Kay was tripped from behind, Dreyer was booked for kicking the ball away. It was at this stage, in the 20th minute, that Oakes came on for Johnson.

Gray and Preece both needed attention when Luton pushed forward. But they were quickly back in the game, which continued to be fast and furious.

In the 27th minute Armstrong chipped the ball over the Luton defence. Owers, already on the run, hit a spectacular volley across the face of the goal with Chamberlain no more than an anxious spectator.

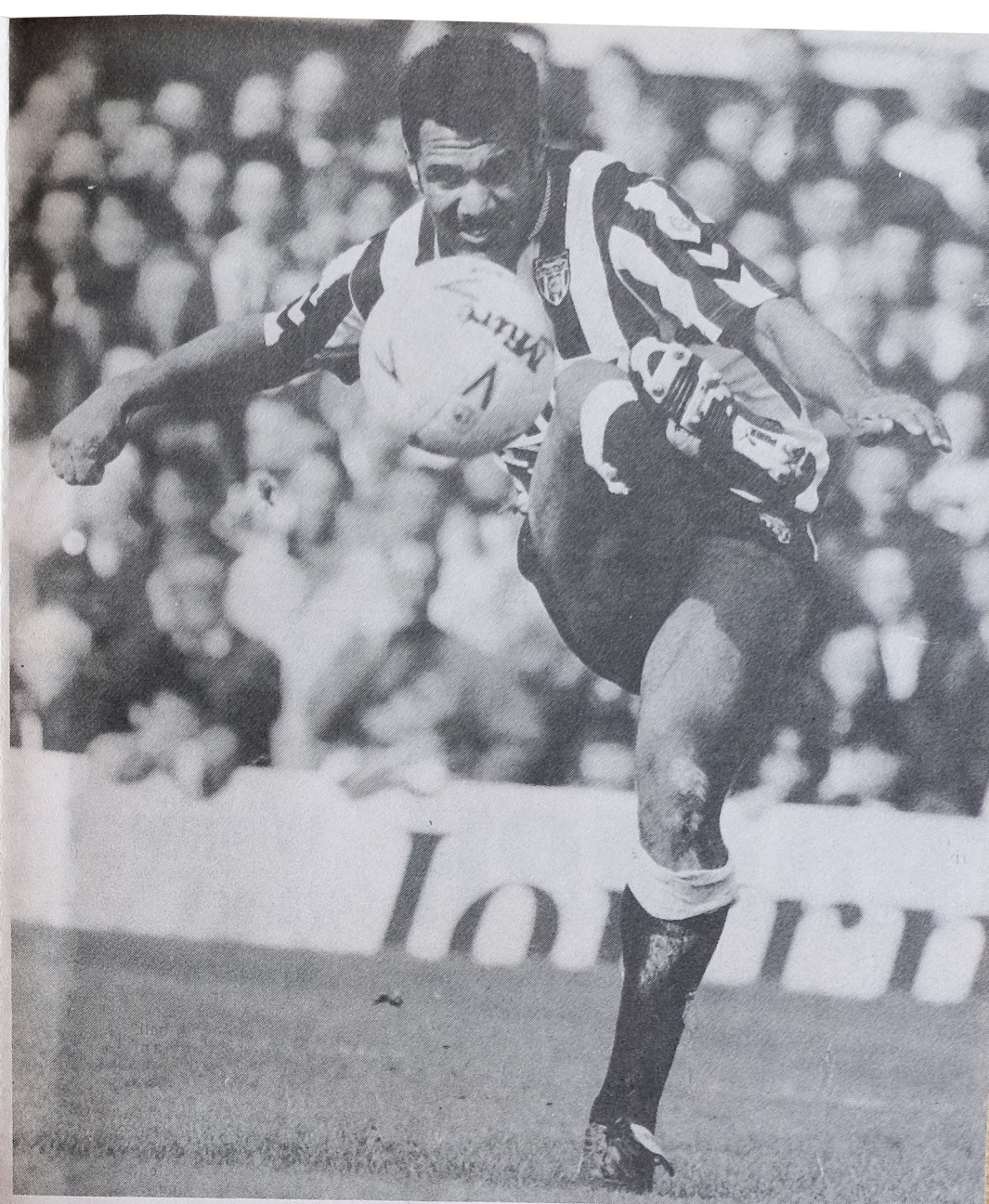
Kay charged down a centre from Oakes to give the visitors a second corner. This was played back to Rees, whose 25-yard effort was always drifting beyond Norman's left-hand post.

Peake was booked in the 30th minute for dissent. A minute later Sunderland were ahead.

Harford knocked down Ball's long free kick and after side-stepping Telfer, GOODMAN calmly looked up and beat Chamberlain all ends up from ten yards.

Two minutes later only a goal-line clearance by Oakes prevented Sunderland from going further ahead.

Armstrong's header was going just inside the upright until the substitute popped up to scramble the



DON GOODMAN coolly fires Sunderland in front against Luton today.

Echo Express No. 16157. Picture by Kevin Brady

ball clear.

Oakes should have become a hero at the other end when he was left unmarked to meet a right-wing centre from Rees. He was completely in the clear, but lashed the ball over the bar.

Owers dispossessed Kamara and after making progress brought in Atkinson. He in turn was forced to go back and find Gray, whose centre was headed wide by Goodman.

Cunnington surged through the middle and overcame two challenges only for his effort to be charged down by James. A tremendous struggle developed just inside the penalty area before Luton were awarded a free kick in the crowded goalmouth.

A Goodman centre was charged behind for a corner. This was driven in by Owers and headed on by Harford for Atkinson to have a powerful shot charged down.

In the third minute of injury time Armstrong had a shot blocked. From the rebound, Gray's 25-yard piledriver whistled inches past the post with Chamberlain well beaten.

HALF TIME:
Sunderland 1 Luton 0

Atkinson pounced on the loose ball after Goodman had been challenged by James, and his low drive brought Chamberlain to his knees.

Ball got up well above Dixon to head clear, then Telfer was hopelessly off-target with a long-range effort.

Phil Gray latched onto a mistake by Butcher. His low snapshot from just outside the area was turned behind by Norman as the

ball bobbed awkwardly to the goalkeeper's left.

Disaster struck for Sunderland in the 49th minute when Luton drew level.

Ball was pulled up for a challenge from behind on Gray. Sunderland were still regrouping as three Luton players stood over the ball, but PREECE, spotting Norman well off his line, stepped forward to leave the goalkeeper stranded with a perfectly-judged 25-yard chip over his head.

Phil Gray met a right-wing centre from Telfer to head over the bar. But it was nearer still in the 53rd minute.

Substitute Oakes gained possession and let fly from fully 30 yards. Norman redeemed himself with a magnificent diving save, flinging himself to his left to turn the ball behind.

Cunnington was caught offside when Mickey Gray hoisted the ball in from the left, but it was immaterial as his weak header finished well wide.

Luton's Gray had a shot charged down. When he played the ball back into the middle, Reece's weak header failed to test Norman.

Luton had gained in confidence from the equaliser and the home fans were becoming increasingly restive at the ease with which they had taken over.

Sunderland, roared on by the crowd, forced a right-wing corner. After a patient build-up, a clever chip by Armstrong got Atkinson in. But before he could work his way into a shooting position, the ball was scrambled behind for a fruitless corner.

Armstrong sold Gray short and the youngster was dispossessed by Dreyer. The full back stormed down the right and it took a timely interception by Ball to nip in ahead of Dixon and head behind for a corner.

The crowd vented their feelings after a mix-up between Cunningham and Harford.

The service to Harford and Goodman after the interval had been diabolical.

Play was held up while Preece received attention. When play resumed, Sunderland piled on the pressure without being able to make it count.

Sunderland were in the process of bringing on Davenport for Harford when Luton forced a right-wing corner. Harford dropped back and was perfectly positioned to head out when the ball was floated in to the far post.

Davenport finally came on for Harford in the 77th minute.

In the next minute Dixon tested Norman with a 25-yard snapshot, the goalkeeper responding with another flying save.

Armstrong was booked in the 80th minute for dissent.

Sunderland progressed down the right with Goodman forcing a throw-in when challenged by Preece.

Butcher hoisted an up-and-under into the penalty area, but Davenport miscued. When the ball fell to Owers, his shot went just wide.

The injured Gray hobbled off, and immediately Sunderland should have regained the lead.

Davenport and Owers failed to connect cleanly and when the ball rolled across the face of the goal Goodman failed to make contact.

But the groans turned to cheers when Goodman put Sunderland back in front in 87 minutes.

Owers headed the ball down and GOODMAN was surrounded by two defenders, but still managed to force the ball under the body of Chamberlain.

Sunderland were rocked in the 90th minute when TELFER was unchallenged to head home a right-wing corner with virtually the last fling of the match.

FINAL SCORE:
Sunderland 2 Luton 2
Attendance: 16,493

GOAL LINES

GOODMAN 31 min
Preece 49
GOODMAN 87
Telfer 90

Top Scots scorers

		Premier Division				
		L	SC	LC	E	OT
McCaig (Rangers)	34	5	8	2	0	49
Hatley (Rangers)	20	1	3	3	0	27
Shearer (Aberdeen)	18	1	5	0	0	24
Wright (St Johnstone)	13	2	5	0	0	20
Dodds (Dundee)	15	1	1	0	0	17
Jess (Aberdeen)	12	2	2	0	0	16
Pastellon (Aberdeen)	12	1	3	0	0	16
Booth (Aberdeen)	10	6	0	0	0	16
Comolly (Dundee Utd)	12	0	3	0	0	15
Ferguson (Dundee Utd)	12	1	2	0	0	15
Robertson (Hearts)	11	3	1	0	0	15
Jackson (Hibernian)	12	1	0	1	0	14
Payton (Celtic)	12	0	2	0	0	14
Creaney (Celtic)	9	0	2	2	0	13
McGinlay (Hibernian)	9	2	1	1	0	13

Key: L - League; SC - SFA Cup; LC - League Cup; E - European; BO - B&Q Cup; OT - others; Tot - total.

TODAY'S MATCHES NOT INCLUDED



SUNDERLAND PLAYER-BOSS Terry Butcher brings down a high ball, watched by team-mates Kevin Ball and Mick Harford and Luton midfielder Trevor Peake



TWO LUTON DEFENDERS converge to try and stop Butcher from getting in a shot at goal