



Sheffield United . . . 1 Luton Town . . 3

Luton pile on the

Blades agony

Tony Pritchett at Bramall Lane

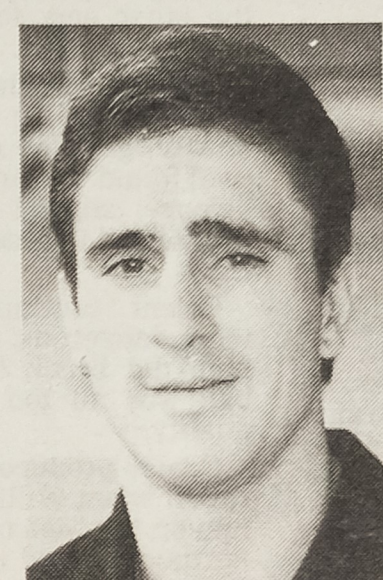
UNITED
Kelly
Gage
Scott
Rogers
Gayle
Marshall (S)
Reed
Gannon
Blake
Flo
Whitehouse

Subs: Littlejohn, Hodgson, Mercer (gk).

LUTON
Sommer
James
Johnson
Waddock
Thomas
Peake
Telfar
Hughes
Dixon
Preece
Marshall (D)

Subs: Oakes, Thorpe, Barber (gk)

Referee: Jim Parker (Preston)



Doug Hodgson: replaced injured Flo

AUSTRALIAN defender Doug Hodgson was the new name in Sheffield United's squad for this afternoon's match against Luton at Bramall Lane.

Hodgson was on the bench but United made two starting line-up changes from the side beaten at West Brom in midweek, Nathan Blake and John Reed replacing Adrian Littlejohn and Mitch Ward.

Blackburn manager Kenny Dalglish was among the soccer VIP's attending the game.

NATHAN Blake scored his first Bramall Lane goal of the season to put United in front against Luton this afternoon.

Despite losing Jostein Flo after only 10 minutes — the big Australian Doug Hodgson taking over in his place — United attacked with style and had two attempts blocked on the line but an own goal by Brian Gayle, turning in a header from Mitchell Thomas levelled the scores before half-time.

Gage, continuing his excellent form of recent games, made a brilliant early interception and put Blake away neatly but Luton managed to cut out the cross.

Then in more United pressure Gannon's inswinger from the right asked more questions of Luton's defence and suddenly there was a half chance to Whitehouse but his half hit shot was sliced well wide of goal.

This was a great start by United and they came close to snatching a spectacular goal in the fourth minute.

Gannon played the ball to Reed and his swinging attempt from out on the left was headed up onto the bar by a defender and Luton scrambled the rebound away.

Flo was injured in trying to turn a good run by Scott into a goal and the big Norwegian, after limping for a moment or two was forced to go off. But to the surprise of the crowd it was the Australian defender Doug Hodgson and not Adrian Littlejohn who was ordered to take over up front alongside Blake.

Hodgson had impressed in a reserve match at Bolton on Wednesday and he almost scored with his first touch but James hacked the ball off the line.

In 17 minutes United at last ended their long run without a goal. Blake put it away with a sharp header but all the credit went to Gage. In a strong and well controlled run in from the right Gage held off two Luton players and supplied the perfect cross for BLAKE to finish off.

Strike

Dixon had a good header saved by Kelly but then United might have made it two. Bad defending by James who gave the ball straight to Whitehouse put United on the attack. Whitehouse turned James inside out before squaring the ball to Hodgson whose fierce strike on goal struck Mitchell Thomas and bounced away.



Reach for the sky: Luton town keeper Jurgen Sommer stretches to get a hand to this United effort at Bramall Lane today

Blake looked a much more purposeful and confident player with that goal behind him but he got a nasty whack in the face which needed treatment soon afterwards.

Then Whitehouse and Reed combined cleverly again and United were certainly giving a much more purposeful performance this afternoon and it was difficult to understand why they had struggled for so long without a goal.

After 34 minutes United scored a second goal — but this time it was for the opposition.

Defensively they were not well organised when Thomas attacked them, Marshall headed out but Dwight Marshall saved it from going dead and when Telfar crossed Thomas was waiting to have a go at goal. There was nothing specially devastating about his finish but GAYLE, trying to intercept, stabbed it passed Kelly for an own goal.

United's Marshall was cautioned for a foul on his namesake then Telfar got the yellow

Another marvellous United move just before half-time had Luton in bother. Whitehouse foraged and crossed to Hodgson, who got in a great touch but Sommer palmed it away for a corner.

Half time:

Sheffield United 1
Luton 1

A remarkable turn of speed by young Scott got United out of a hole in the first minute after half-time. Dixon looked well offside but there was no flag and Scott needed all of his pace and long legs to get across from left to right to whip the ball away.

Cautioned

Luton had come out full of endeavour and ambition but Gannon and Rogers together stopped them and then Marshall looked solid with a good clearance.

There was real panic in front of the Luton goalkeeper in 52 minutes when Reed's swing-

ing free kick had Luton all at sea. Two or three players had a swing at it before the ball was scrambled away.

Then Luton's Telfar, already cautioned, was lucky to stay on when he put up a high boot but the referee contented himself with a long lecture.

Then when United attacked again a posse of players converged on goalkeeper Sommer and the referee sorted it out by cautioning Gayle.

There was a neatness about all that Luton did and another lovely passing move brought a chance for Dwight Marshall which Kelly just managed to touch away from goal for a corner.

Then a foul on Dixon offered Luton a free kick in a dangerous position, six yards outside United's penalty area. Preece rolled it to Telfar whose first timer got the deflection for a corner and a continuation of the pressure.

United's problems deepened as the half wore on with Telfar and Waddock finding an extra touch of class to inspire Luton.

Blake should have punished them however but he hesitated for half a second expecting a free kick and when none came the opportunity had gone.

United should surely have made it 2-1 in the 70th minute. Blake did wonderfully well to get the ball inside the Luton penalty area but with Whitehouse and Hodgson waiting for the simple pull back Blake couldn't pick either of them out and Luton scrambled it away.

This was a good spell from United and Gage hit another good ball into the box but again Peake got it away.

Predictably however Luton's more controlled football brought them a second goal in 73 minutes. A quality ball to Dwight Marshall from Preece unhinged United and when it was pulled back across goal right back JAMES had a simple job to smack it into the top of the net.

United took off Rogers and used an extra striker Littlejohn and then Luton, with Preece injured, brought on Oakes.

United stumbled into deeper trouble in the 80th minute when Luton went 3-1 up.

Another quality ball down Luton's left hand side found Oakes and his cross was headed neatly into the bottom corner by DIXON, a goal which instantly lead to hundreds of fans deciding they had seen enough and it was time to go home.

Attendance: 13,317