

Luton humiliate Keane

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By Tim Rich

LUTON TOWN 3
SUNDERLAND 0

IN HIS years at Manchester United Roy Keane was many things, but he was never humiliated. Since leaving Old Trafford, however, the Sunderland manager has known what every mortal endures – the sting of having the iced water of strange results flung in your face.

His first game for Celtic was a Scottish FA Cup defeat by Clyde, a club so insignificant it trades under the name of 'The Bully Wee'. And now there was this, hopelessly beaten at Luton, where in May Sunderland had celebrated winning the Championship with a 5-0 victory – a feeling his Luton counterpart, Kevin Blackwell, likened to having a lottery winner coming to your house to celebrate.

Keane was beaten by two goals from Paul Furlong, a man two years older than he is. It was, he said, his greatest disappointment in his year as a manager.

All evening, smoke drifted across the chalets that make up the corporate boxes at Kenilworth Road, although the source of the fire could not have generated the heat that Keane's tongue would have produced in the away dressing room.

In public, he was much calmer. "We did not do the basics right. If they don't stand in the wall for a free-kick, they will be punished," he said softly. "When we were last here everyone was celebrating but I wasn't because I knew there had to be massive changes. We still need changes; a stronger squad with more physical presence." Yesterday he learnt that his midfielder, Dean Whitehead, would miss the next six months with a cruciate injury.

This was the first anniversary of Keane's accession as manager of Sunderland, the day after a 1-0 defeat at Bury in the Carling Cup, a night that had persuaded most of Wearside they would be crashing through the divisions rather than winning immediate promotion.



Sweet strike: Paul Furlong, who scored twice for Luton, claims his first goal against Sunderland

In those 12 months Keane would have seen nothing like this. Sunderland's display was a succession of self-inflicted wounds, not least Greg Halford's dismissal for two yellow cards inside a dozen minutes. From the moment David Bell smashed a free-kick that would have taken off any part of the Sunderland wall that tried to stop it, Luton were technically superior.

The night's defining figure was Furlong. Perhaps he is too good to be dismissed with that caustic noun

'journeyman' but in his 39th year he has discovered Luton to be a rich final pasture. There was nothing of the journeyman in his first goal. Surprised to be given so much space by a supposed Premier League defence, his chip over Darren Ward was exquisite. Bundling over the third showed him stronger than any Sunderland player around him.

As the two managers departed into a night lit by fireworks, it was to destinations that meant a great

deal. Luton's next match takes Blackwell to Leeds, a club he came within one game of taking to the Premier League and whose decision to sack him still burns. For Keane, Old Trafford awaits.

Luton Town (4-4-2): Forde, Jackson (Keane 35), Perry, Coyne, Goodall; Bell, Robinson, Spring, Morgan (McVeigh 69); Talbot (Andrew 77), Furlong. **Subs:** Hutchison, Brkovic.
Booked: Morgan.
Sunderland (4-4-2): Ward; Halford, Nosworthy, Anderson, Wallace; Stokes (Yorke 77), Etuhu (O'Donovan 62), Leadbitter, Miller; Chopra, Murphy (Connolly 62). **Subs:** Carson (g) Yorke, Donoghue. **Booked:** Etuhu, Halford, Connolly, Wallace.
Sent off: Halford.
Referee: T Kettle (Rutland).