



Baynham, the Luton goalkeeper, leaps and safely cuts out this cross from Matthews as McIlroy (LEFT) lurks ready for any slip: so does Morton at his shoulder.

MATTHEWS WRITES ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE LEGEND

By RADFORD BARRETT

Stoke 2 Luton 0

AT 4.14 p.m. on Saturday I discovered why no one has written a successful novel about soccer. Stanley Matthews scored a goal which assured Stoke of the Division Two title and established a truth that will for ever out-shine the most imaginative fiction, because he was a professional with the club when they last won the title 30 years ago.

His goal raised a cheer thunderous enough to break every cup and saucer in the Potteries, and rouse Josiah Spode from beneath his blackened gravestone in the churchyard across from the Victoria Ground.

Matthews stood later in the dressing room wearing a few generous smears of mud and a large smile and said that after 10 minutes of the game he had felt "in these old bones" that Luton would be beaten.

So reticent as to make Gary Cooper look a raving extrovert, Matthews had done it again. I confess I had the gravest doubts that he could at 48, be sufficiently "in" the game to deserve the "Footballer of the Year" award.

SOUND SUPPORT

All-out team effort

By the final whistle the tide of soccer history, which Matthews personifies, had proved me wrong. It must be said that McIlroy, Mudie and Ratcliffe and every member of Stoke's tough and confident defence had given him full support from the start. Yet this match will remain in the memory

first and foremost as another act in the Matthews legend.

But that goal: two minutes after the interval McIlroy pumped the ball down the middle from inside his own half. Matthews moved off so quickly that the defence was caught square.

Bramwell never looked like robbing him and good old Stan sprinted clear on Baynham's right and carefully swept the ball all along the ground into the net. What a moment for his first goal of the season!

There were doubtful moments for Stoke. Allen rushing across to cover a centre from Davies hit the ball against his own bar in the eighth minute. Luton moved much more purposefully for a quarter hour, then Stoke took over though it was a scrambled goal hooped overhead by Mudie that put them ahead after 33 minutes whereupon Luton fell to the level of a very poor side indeed.

Stoke's flowing skill

Matthews' goal seemed to unshackle the flowing skill of his colleagues so that the second half had enough wit to make one forget the anxieties that made Stoke seem leaden-footed early on. But how I wish he would retire, or as he puts it, change his occupation, before the legend suffers an anti-climax.

Stoke.—O'Neill; Asprey; Allen; Clamp; Stuart; Skeels; Matthews; Viollet; Mudie; McIlroy; Ratcliffe.

Luton.—Baynham; McNally; Bramwell; Morton; Kelly; Groves; McKechnie; Turner; Davies; McGuffie; Jardine.