

O'ROURKE MAKES SURE

Luton 2, Watford 1: By GEORGE CRANFIELD



JOHN O'Rourke, Luton's 19-year-old centre forward, settled this promotion and relegation clash with two goals in the last eight minutes.

They made O'Rourke the scorer of 21 goals in 22 games for Luton since being released by Chelsea on a free transfer in December.

They meant certain survival in the Third Division for Luton, and they brought to an abrupt end Watford's promotion hopes.

Watford had gone ahead in the 55th minute, and all of their supporters present interposed terrific cheering with sullen nail-biting as they hoped their favourites would hold out for the last, despairing minutes.

Then O'Rourke struck. The lad who confessed: "I was scoring goals for Arsenal as an amateur and with Chelsea in the reserve team; but they wouldn't give me a first team break," showed what the London clubs had missed.

A dynamic, bubbling ball of energy throughout every nerve-tingling minute, O'Rourke pounced like a panther to ram home the equaliser, following McBain's free kick in the 82nd minute.

Then, two minutes from the end, he was Johnny-on-the-spot again to slide the ball home from close quarters, following a centre by Turner.

Watford, lacking thrust in the forward line, apart from all-alone Charlie Livesey, got their goal in scrambling fashion.

Spelman, out of touch on the right wing, made a brief switch to the left, and centred for Harris to glide the ball just inside the post.

For a game with so much at stake before 19,799 fans, Luton's biggest crowd in four years, and played with all the verve of a Cup tie, the football was of a high order.

Not, perhaps, high enough for the Second Division, as Watford have now found out.

In the dressing-room publican chairman Tom Hodgson was waiting with half-a-dozen bottles of champagne.

But Watford, heads down, crestfallen and beyond consoling, locked their doors to all-comers.

Watford manager Bill McGarry refused to answer any questions and would not accept the champagne sent by Luton officials.

Luton manager Bill Harvey said: "There's no misery here. We've been in the dumps for five seasons, and now we think the tide will turn."