

HANDICAPPED TOWN HELD ON TO POINT

O'Rourke's Injury Put A Strain On The Defence

By Chiltern

BRENTFORD 2, LUTON TOWN 2

WHEN a player makes the impact on the football scene that young John O'Rourke made last season, then it is obvious that he will receive extra attention from opposing defences.

This, the Town realised, but they certainly hoped that he would not run into the sort of trouble that happened to him after a quarter of an hour at Brentford on Saturday.

Then, a hard tackle which resulted in him being kicked on the right ankle, virtually put him out of the game.

Although he carried on in his usual position after having had attention, it was obvious that he was badly handicapped and not surprising when he switched to outside-right where he was no more than a limping passenger.

This was a crucial blow for the Town who were going well following the impetus of a first minute goal by O'ROURKE, who rounded off a move that has been thoroughly rehearsed in private trials.

Whittaker picked up a loose ball in midfield and promptly swept it through the middle between two defenders. Gelson was caught out of position and O'Rourke was on the spot to collect the ball, make a bee-line for goal and side foot the ball into the net as Brodie came desperately out of his penalty area.

That gave rise to hopes that the Town would repeat their victory of last season on this ground and I feel that that would have been a highly probable result but for the mishap to O'Rourke.

As it was, Brentford, who had begun in ragged, haphazard style, began to settle down and they equalised after 19 minutes when BONSON headed through a corner from Fielding. Baynham went out to try to cut off the cross and it was claimed by Town defenders that he was impeded.

For a time, Brentford looked the more dangerous, but the edge was taken off their play again in the 27th minute when Reid collected the ball, and Whittaker took it from his feet before passing to McKECHNIE who hit it left footed past the apparently unsighted Brodie.

SEEMED TO BE IN TROUBLE

So matters rested until half-time when the news of O'Rourke was by no means encouraging. McKechnie was at centre-forward, with Riddick at inside-right and the second half began with some persistent Brentford pressure.

When BONSON equalised again after 55 minutes when a centre by Fielding was never cleared, the Town looked to be in trouble, but the defence stood firm against another series of heavy attacks.

There were several inspired saves by Baynham, and the fury had gone out of the Brentford raids long before the end.

It was not a great game because pure football was mostly subjugated to hard tackling and spoiling tactics, which were mainly the responsibility of the home side.

There were several niggling incidents which, fortunately, did not develop into anything worse, despite the fact that there were times when the game did not seem to be so firmly controlled as it should have been.

AUGURS WELL FOR THE NEW SEASON

To come away with a point in such circumstances was a great performance by the Town and one which augurs well for the new

season. Certainly they showed plenty of fighting spirit, and every player gave 100 per cent effort.

For much of the time the defence carried a heavy burden with fortitude, and it was good to note that Fincham began in the same sort of vein in which he ended last season, when he played a notable part in the fight to stave off relegation.

There was pretty good support for him all the way around, particularly from Lownds, who was always in the thick of things and who worked like a Trojan.

After a tardy sort of start, Pacey found his best form, and although both McBain and Bramwell found themselves in trouble at times against two dangerous wingers, they, nevertheless, kept going and were never easy to beat.

Some responsibility rested on Baynham for the second goal, but he more than made up for that by his work later when he cut out centres with all his old skill and aplomb.

Early on, while it was at full strength, the forward line looked full of promise, though there was no real evidence that Riddick can be the answer at outside-right.

When he moved inside he showed some neat touches, but the main forward honours went to Reid and Whittaker, both of whom got through a tremendous amount of work.

McKechnie was linking up well as the second spearhead until he was forced to switch into the middle, where he was given little scope, not only because of the close marking, but because the front line was not functioning on all cylinders, due to the injury to O'Rourke.

BRENTFORD: Brodie; Jones, Thomson; Scott, Gelson, Higginson; Lazarus, McAdams, Bonson, Ward, Fielding.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham; McBain, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, Lownds; Riddick, McKechnie, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker.

Referee: G D Roper, Cambridge. Attendance: 10,400.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"John O'Rourke, Chelsea throw-out, whose 22 goals in 23 matches saved Luton from relegation last season, took only 60 seconds to hit the same goal-scoring form.

"He snapped up a long pass from ex-Arsenal ground boy Ray Whittaker, set off on a 100 yards dash and in a race for the ball pipped goalkeeper Brodie to slide it into the net.

"But Luton's joy was short-lived. Soon after O'Rourke was tackled by Gelson and damaged his right ankle. For the rest of the match he limped along the right wing and Luton, who had looked likely to smother a jittery Brentford defence lost some of their bite."—"The People."

"Luton may have to pay heavily for their point from this 2-2 draw against Brentford at Griffin Park. Their high scoring centre-forward 19-years-old John O'Rourke badly damaged an ankle and limped on the wing for three-quarters of the match."—"News of the World."

"Just how much Luton depend on O'Rourke and Baynham was amply demonstrated at Griffin Park, as they virtually took on Brentford by themselves. O'Rourke, 22 goals last season, made a sensational start when he scored from Whittaker's pass with only 60 seconds gone.

"Then only Baynham stood against Brentford's all-out onslaught. He played magnificently, but had no chance with newcomer Bonson's goals."—"Sunday Telegraph."

"Live-wire John O'Rourke, 19-years-old centre-forward who was rejected by Arsenal and Chelsea only to find golden glory with Luton last season began where he left off—banging the ball into the net.

"It took fresh-faced O'Rourke just 60 seconds to make his mark on the new season. A defence splitting pass by ex-Arsenal winger Ray Whittaker sent O'Rourke sprinting to a 10 yards start on Peter Gelson, one half of Brentford's twin centre-half plan to stop the Luton marksman repeating his four-goal show at Griffin Park six months ago. Goalkeeper Chick Brodie saw the danger and raced out beyond his penalty area—but O'Rourke calmly slipped the ball wide of him to send Luton's supporters wild with excitement."—"Sunday Express."