

O'Rourke is at it again

by DAVID WILSON

Brentford 2, Luton 2

LIVE-WIRE John O'Rourke, 19-year-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.

But O'Rourke, whose 22 goals in 23 games saved Luton from relegation last season, was given little chance of a repeat performance. A tackle by Gelson flattened him and he needed treatment for a painful right ankle injury. He limped on the right wing in the second half and the speedy Luton forwards, who had found gaps in the Brentford defence, lost their effectiveness.

Yo-Yo game

This yo-yo game ended all-square—thanks to Brentford's newcomer, centre-forward Joe Bonson from Newport. He soared high above the Luton defence after 19 minutes to head home a John Fielding corner wide of Ron Baynham to wipe out O'Rourke's sensational opener.

And it was big Joe who rammed in a second equaliser 11 minutes after half-time to wipe out another Luton goal.

Luton, who had taken the lead before the interval when Tommy McKechnie turned and hit in a low shot past Brodie after a slick interchange of passes with Whittaker on the right, had a hard time of it later.

Brentford often had the Luton defence clustering together in their penalty area like a beleaguered garrison, and Baynham saved the day when he parried a Mel Scott snorter.

Former Irish international Bill McAdams, deputising for Brentford's injured newcomer Jimmy Bloomfield, so nearly clinched it in the dying seconds, but his shot was inches wide.

Plenty of bite and excitement kept the crowd happy, but Brentford missed the Bloomfield touch in midfield. Their punch and enthusiasm did not make up for lack of skill.