

THIS IS THE STUFF

RAMPANT O'ROURKE HIT THREE OF BEST

Score line did not tell true story of the match

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 4, DONCASTER ROVERS 3

THIS was the sort of medicine needed to bring the crowds back to Kenilworth Road. Plenty of action and incident and sufficient goals to satisfy the most avid supporter.

Add to that a five star performance by John O'Rourke, who scored three times and who might well have doubled his output had things really gone right for him, and this Thursday evening adds up to as joyous an occasion as the Town have had for some time.

In this case, the score-line far from conveyed the whole story, because it did not indicate the measure of superiority that the Town attained and it is no exaggeration to say that they should have had at least a margin of three goals in their favour at the finish.

Yet, such was the cut-and-thrust nature of this game when fortunes, through the way in which the goals came, swung bewilderingly, that Doncaster were presented with a chance to rescue a point when Jeffrey, former England under 23 star, produced one of his old-time drives nine minutes from the end.

Tinsley got his hands to it, but the force of the ball carried it over the line and the Town's advantage that had looked so secure, was cut to a flimsy one.

Tension there was, but ex-

cept for one occasion when the ball was crossed hard and head high by Robinson and was missed by the slenderest of margins by Ogden's head, there was no real scare and the Town went on to gain the points they so richly deserved.

TOWN BEGAN WITH A RUSH

From the start, the Town were busy and effective in attack and there was nearly an early lead when Whittaker produced the perfect pass for Stark whose shot was just smothered by Potter coming out in desperate fashion.

In the next minute, O'Rourke streamed through after a pass by Rivers and, with only Potter to beat, crashed the ball over the bar which was out of character with what was to follow.

With the Town infinitely the more dangerous, it came as a

surprise when Doncaster broke away to take the lead after 12 minutes. A pass floated over Reid's head to Grainger to whom Thomson was not close enough and the winger slipped the ball inside to JEFFREY who made no mistake in gliding it past Tinsley.

However, the Town took the setback in their stride and O'ROURKE obtained the first of his goals in the 20th minute with a brilliant first time shot from a pass by Read.

A minute later, the lively WHITTAKER received the ball after a half clearance and flashed it low into the far corner of the net to put the Town ahead.

BAD LUCK TWICE FOR O'ROURKE

Goals continued to come and Doncaster were level again three minutes later when Rivers made a bad mistake in front of goal to leave OGDEN with a chance which he accepted with alacrity.

However, the Town refused to be dismayed and O'Rourke had a cruel slice of luck when he saw a shot hit the far post and again when Wylie made a sensational clearance by kicking off the goal-line after the centre-forward had beaten Potter.

So the teams were still level at half-time, but the Town came back with renewed energy and there was a gasp when Whittaker missed his kick completely when running in to meet a centre from Gibson.

With 54 minutes gone, O'ROURKE chased a ball sent deep out of defence by Rivers, down the left wing, and deceived Potter into thinking he was going to centre to waiting colleagues in front of goal.

Instead, he aimed for the far corner with his left foot, and the goalkeeper was left stranded.

O'ROURKE STOLE THIS SHOW

At this stage, it was pretty nearly all O'ROURKE. He missed by inches, forced Potter to a smart save and then, after 71 minutes, set the seal on a fine performance with a firmly headed goal from a corner by Gibson.

After that, the Town seemed to be coasting home, until there came that nasty jolt produced by Jeffrey's great drive.

There was no doubt that

O'Rourke stole this show with his liveliness and quickness and next in line in the attack was the other former youth star who wants a move, Whittaker.

Stark made a bright start, but was inclined to be patchy afterwards. Possibly, there is some inclination to underestimate the unorthodox Read but he is doing a valuable job off the ball by taking much of the weight off O'Rourke, as the openings that accrued to the leader proved, and for this reason alone I would persevere with him there.

MORE MOBILITY REQUIRED

For Gibson, of course, it is something of a handicap to be playing out of position, but he is designated to do a stint among the middle line as well as his duties as a winger but, unfortunately, at the moment, he is not being quite mobile enough.

There was some strong play by Reid and Moore, both of whom covered sensibly and quickly and apart from his one mistake that cost a goal, Rivers was pretty dominant in the middle.

Thomson and Jardine were solid enough and, although three shots went past Tinsley, he could not be held responsible.

In fact, the only blot on the evening so far as the Town were concerned was that those first two Doncaster goals came very much into the preventable category and it was fortunate that they had the fire power of O'Rourke to counter them.

LUTON TOWN: Tinsley; Thomson, Jardine; Reid, Rivers, Moore; Gibson, Read, O'Rourke, Stark, Whittaker.

DONCASTER ROVERS: Potter; Kelly, Nicholson; Wylie, Ripley, Ricketts; Robinson, Sheffield, Ogden, Jeffrey, Grainger.

Referee: A. R. C. Weller, Bromley. Attendance: 5,020.