

# TOWN DOWN DARLINGTON IN MUDDY PROMOTION BATTLE

## Whittaker, O'Rourke find the target

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By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, DARLINGTON 0

**THERE seems to be no halting Luton Town now in their drive for promotion. After taking a point yesterday from league leaders Colchester, they demolished Darlington at Kenilworth Road today.**

The northern side, also with their eyes on promotion, had the advantage of having had no match yesterday, but were clearly beaten by a goal in each half, scored by Whittaker and O'Rourke.

Heavy rain which persisted up to kick-off time spoilt the prospect of Town having their biggest League game of the season.

Yet, the faithful turned up, so that the crowd was of quite respectable size, though there is no doubt that the weather cost the club several hundreds of pounds.

Not only that, but the pitch had taken a rare soaking; conditions once the surface had cut up were certain to be like a quagmire.

With Graham French still unfit, because of a pulled groin muscle, Billy Harber continued as outside-right, and Town lined up exactly as they did at Colchester yesterday.

On the other hand, Darlington, who had watched yesterday's game, had had the benefit of an extra day's rest which could prove beneficial in view of the heavy state of the going.

They were able to field their selected side, which included Hutchinson, who played against the Town for Lincoln City earlier in the season.

In fact, were two former Newcastle players—Cummings, in whom the Town had an interest at one time, and O'Neill, the outside-left.

**LUTON TOWN:** Ramage; Riddick, Jardine; Gibson, Woods, Moore; Harber, Edwards, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker; substitute, Read.

**DARLINGTON:** Moor; Peverell, Keeble; Yeoman, Jacques, Ratcliffe; McGeachie, Hutchinson, Cummings, Sproates, O'Neill; substitute, Hopper.

Referee: G. Martin, of Whitechurch.

### REID CHOOSES THE OAK ROAD END

Reid won the toss and wisely chose to defend the Oak Road end which would probably cut up badly by half-time.

Darlington were dangerous early on, and they appealed for a penalty when Riddick tackled O'Neill, but the referee would have none of it.

Then, the Town began to press, and a long centre by Whittaker was cleared well by Moor in the face of a challenge by Edwards.

Players were skidding all over the place as the rain con-

tinued to pelt down.

A good tackle by Riddick on O'Neill spiked another Darlington raid, though at the expense of a corner.

After this, there was a foul by Yeoman on Whittaker, but the free kick was unproductive.

Darlington were looking very impressive with their freedom of movement and were causing the Town defence to be in trouble.

With Darlington still looking a smart outfit, Ramage saved from Cummings, and was fouled in the process by Hutchinson, who received a warning word from the referee.

### TOWN MISTAKE IN THE MUD

A foul by Moore on McGeachie brought a free kick which Peverell wasted by driving the ball straight at the left-half. Still, Darlington were looking the sharper team because too many of the Town players were trying to drag the ball through the mud instead of using it quickly to make ground.

There were signs of panic in the Darlington defence when Woods sent in a long free kick after O'Rourke had been fouled by Jacques, and Raddcliffe headed behind, needlessly, it seemed. The corner kick had the effect of keeping the Town on the attack, but it ended with Edwards caught offside.

There was a close call for the Town when Hutchinson suddenly slipped through to make a cross which Moore stopped on the goal-line, and finally Gibson hooked the ball clear.

The game was now a real mudbath with players slithering around all over the place, and most of them rapidly becoming plastered from head to foot.

### DARLINGTON LOOKING DANGEROUS

Darlington were looking the more dangerous, and O'Neill forced Ramage into violent action from an acute angle.

There were boos from the crowd and warning words from the referee for Jacques for a foul on O'Rourke as he sought to break through down the left wing, and there was a hold-up while the centre-

ward received attention for the second time in two days.

O'Rourke recovered after a lengthy stoppage, but the resultant free-kick did not avail the Town much, because it was speedily cleared.

A strong tackle by Jardine on Cummings was heartily cheered by the crowd, who were not appreciating the strong-arm defensive tactics of Darlington, especially so far as O'Rourke was concerned.

Again, O'Rourke was pulled down, this time without the benefit of a free-kick.

Darlington swept back into attack for Cummings to make a shot which went straight at Ramage.

### WHITTAKER PUTS TOWN AHEAD

Immediately after this, the Town broke away and took the lead after 23 minutes through WHITTAKER. The goal was the product of some strong work by O'Rourke down the right wing. He beat off a challenge by Ratcliffe, made a centre at which Edwards dived but missed, as did Moor. The ball stuck in the mud, and Whittaker was on hand to poke it into the net for a very timely goal indeed.

Back came Darlington, and O'Neill should have done better than shoot over from



RAY WHITTAKER was on hand to put O'Rourke's pass into the net and put Luton ahead after 23 minutes.

point-blank range from a pass by Hutchinson.

Moor did well to cut out a long, high centre from Whittaker, who had been sent away by O'Rourke, and as Darlington came back, there was a clash between Woods and Hutchinson. Immediately afterwards a free kick was given against Harber for a foul on Ratcliffe. This was sent wide by the left-half, both Woods and Cummings missing it.

### WHITTAKER MISSES THIS TIME

Whittaker cut out a chance to increase Town's lead from a pass by O'Rourke. The left-winger went on with great determination, but, with the crowd expecting a goal, he shot too high.

Town were on top now, but Whittaker was out of luck with a shot that struck Keeble and rebounded for a corner kick, after strong work by Edwards and Harber.

Two free kicks against the Town took Darlington back on to the attack. There were distinct signs at times that this would turn out to be a rough-house before the finish.

Cleverly winning a corner, Whittaker placed it low to the nippy O'Rourke, who got in first to switch it to O'Rourke on the left wing, and it ran out of play.

Then, Reid nearly atoned by racing through from Whittaker's pass and crossing the ball low, but before Whittaker could reach it Moor was out to grab it.

### TEMPERS AGAIN BECOME FRAZED

Next, O'Rourke had a partly successful tussle with Moor without being able to get the ball goalwards, and then Peverell got a severe shaking up in a tackle on Jardine.

In fact the Town's right-back had to have attention before play could be resumed.

The Town kept on the attack after Whittaker's free kick, until Harber tried some acrobatic trick in front of goal and succeeded only in putting the ball wide.

Temper again became frazed when Hutchinson fouled Moore. It seemed to me that there had been cases where the referee could have taken more drastic action.

Half-time:

LUTON TOWN ..... 1

DARLINGTON ..... 0

An early attempt by O'Rourke to break through was frustrated, and when Darlington hit back, Gibson made a timely clearance from a corner.

A dangerous situation developed for Town when the referee exercised the advantage rule when McGeachie was pushed by Moore, and it was Woods, abetted by Moore, who cleared the danger.

The rain had stopped now and there was even a hint of sunshine, but the pitch had become a muddy morass and it was difficult for the players to move the ball accurately.

### DARLINGTON STILL CHALLENGING

Darlington were trying all they knew to get on level terms again, and wisely Woods headed behind a cross by McGeachie. From the corner there was further threat to the Town goal, cleared by Reid back deep in defence, and then there was another foul on O'Rourke by Jacques. From the free kick, there was a strange incident which the referee certainly did not see, nor did I for that matter, because I was watching the flight of the ball. O'Rourke suddenly went down in a heap for no apparent reason, and needed attention for a facial injury before he could play on.

When Darlington came back again, Ramage went down at the feet of O'Neill to save, and while this was going on Whittaker was on the touch-line having a liberal supply of mud sponged out of his eye by the trainer.

Next Ramage drew applause for a diving catch from a centre by O'Neill. There certainly was plenty of effort in this match from both teams.

### A GOOD CHANCE SLIPS AWAY

As good a chance as the Town had had this half was wasted by Reid, who un-



Centre-forward John O'Rourke put Town two goals up following a free-kick awarded for a foul on him.

expectedly received a pass from Jardine. Instead of pushing it down the middle to Whittaker, he elected to switch it to O'Rourke on the left wing, and it ran out of play.

Then, Reid nearly atoned by racing through from Whittaker's pass and crossing the ball low, but before Whittaker could reach it Moor was out to grab it.

Free kicks were still frequent. There was one against Peverell for a foul on Whittaker, quickly followed by one against Jardine for an infringement on McGeachie.

After this, Whittaker broke through promisingly, but, with O'Rourke and Edwards eagerly waiting for his centre, it was cut off by Moor.

Straight from this, there



was action at the Town end with Ramage making a spectacular save, pulling down a header by Cummings.

### FREE KICK LEADS TO SECOND GOAL

Cleverly, O'Rourke slipped a tackle by Jacques, only to be brought down by Ratcliffe. The free kick put the Town two up after 65 minutes.

There was some doubt

about to whom the credit should go, because Whittaker took the free kick and it got the Darlington defence in all sorts of trouble. Definitely, they, and Moor in particular, were put off by O'Rourke flicking at the ball with his back to the goal. The direction of the ball did not seem to deviate much, but I fancy that the credit must go to the centre-forward.

Immediately after that, Edwards looked like scoring from point-black range, and I think should have done, but his shot was close enough for Moor to make a full-length save.

There was confirmation from the trainer's bench now that O'Rourke had in fact applied the finishing touch to Whittaker's free kick. The centre-forward was in action again, slipping a tackle by Jacques and bringing Moor full-length to save his shot.

### ALL OUT ATTACK BY DARLINGTON

When Darlington, now committed to all-out attack in an endeavour to save the day, swept back again, Riddick was hurt, and while he was being attended to the referee



spotted the Darlington trainer coming on to the pitch to speak to Yeoman, and brusquely waved him off.

At one time it looked as if Riddick was coming off, and in fact he did so. Read began to take off his track suit, as Riddick was led off the field, limping heavily.

Between trainer Charlie Watkins and an ambulance man. This happened after 72 minutes, and Read came in at inside-right, with Edwards going to a

## How the goals came

WHITTAKER for Luton after 23 minutes  
O'Rourke for Luton after 65 minutes.

more orthodox position for him of right-back. Riddick looked in a very poor way as he was taken to the dressing room.

Read immediately got into the mood of this game by tangling with Yeoman and Ratcliffe.

### PEVERELL IS BOOKED

There was still plenty of fight from Darlington, and Ramage made a fine diving save from McGeachie. He could not hold on to the ball, but Woods, showing great presence of mind, tapped it behind for a corner.

Another addition to the list of free kicks was placed unerringly into the goalmouth by Woods, and Moor punched the ball away from Read.

At last, there came a "booking", and not before time, Peverell's name going into the referee's book for an incident involving O'Rourke.

Two ill-judged passes, one by Jardine and the other by Woods, put the Town in deep trouble, and in the end it needed a wonder save by Ramage to keep out a drive by Cummings, and to prevent worry about a repetition of the late events of yesterday's game.

O'Rourke made a determined effort to break through, but was tackled, and Darlington came back to gain a corner on the right.

Woods headed this to Edwards, who put the ball straight to Yeoman, and fortunately the right-half's shot was well off the target area.

Another Town casualty was Moore, but fortunately he was all right almost immediately, having added to his liberal coating of mud. Result:

LUTON TOWN ..... 2  
DARLINGTON ..... 0