

CHELSEA 2, LUTON 0

A GENUINE Cockney sparrow produced the Easter egg that keeps Chelsea's chicks pecking towards promotion—and leaves Luton in the market for miracles,

John Sparrow, Chelsea's swashbuckling young full-back from Bethnal Green, hit his side's superb all-important second goal from twenty-five yards. Stamford Bridge's big promotion battle was settled.

But if you expected Harry Haslam to emerge afterwards like a man with gloom all over his likeable, lived-in face, you were wrong.

The Luton manager came out of the dressing rooms, still sunny-side-up, to concede:

"That goal deserved to win any match. It was a beauty. We might have prevented Chelsea's first goal, but there was no way we could have stopped Sparrow's shot.

Then he added: "Of course we are disappointed at being beaten. But Chelsea earned their win. They were the better side. We're not saying we can't still go up.

"But now we really need the help of others. I can't perform miracles. If I walk into the players' bath, I sink to the bottom and get soaked. I can't walk on water."

Miracles

Haslam has already performed something close to miracles, by keeping Luton in business, and launching them on a run that saw them collect 23 points from 26 before this clash, which could seal both clubs' futures.

It was no classic. Even referee Jack Taylor admitted: "Not much to watch, was there? Too much tension in both sides."

Luton were unlucky to lose full-back Paul Price after half an hour with a nasty left-eye injury. Graham Jones, his 17-year-old replacement, wasn't to blame for the defeat.

Chelsea were simply the better of two tensed

up teams, and they took the chances that mattered.

Big Jock Finnieston hit the first, after a superb through-ball from Ray Lewington had spread-eagled the Luton defence in the 14th minute.

But it was the Cockney Sparrow's magnificent left-foot drive, from Alan West's hurried clearance, that had home fans tossing their Easter bonnets high in the air.

The match programme did a feature piece on young John, and issued the warning: "His promotion to first-team duty has added an extra dimension to our attack."

With this sort of shooting, that dimension is called dynamite!

So Chelsea moved back to the top of the Second Division table, and First Division beckons after the boy from Bethnal Green had proved conclusively that if Sparrows Can't Sing, they can Ping!

After their mauling by Fulham the previous day, Chelsea boss Eddie McCreadie gave his defenders a real talking to.

They all responded well. "Ron Harris was particularly good," said McCreadie.

"But I've always been confident of promotion. Now I'm really optimistic. This was just the result we needed."

COCK SPARROW



■ **Watcher, Cock Sparrow.**
The cheeky Cockney kid from Bethnal Green, John Sparrow (3), receives congratulations from Ian Britton after scoring Chelsea's vital second goal against Luton.