

Hatters: Oldham couldn't hold'em

94/95
Luton 2 Oldham 1

DWIGHT Marshall struck after just 33 seconds as Hatters bagged the opening goal in yesterday's English league programme.

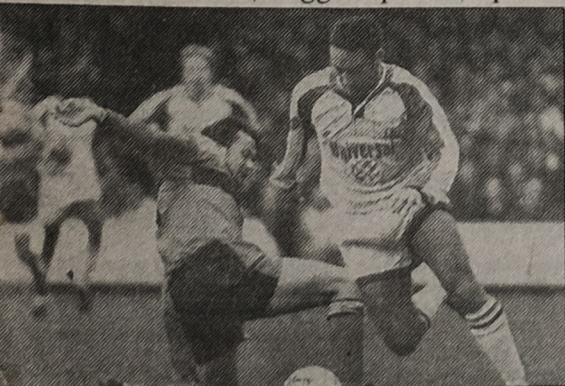
But for the second time in succession the real hero was on-loan striker Wayne Biggins.

Two touches of magic - one from the boot, one from the head - proved the difference between two hopelessly out of sorts sides.

And for the first time this season, Luton ground out a home victory they scarcely deserved, giving them their first win at Kenilworth Road in five long weeks.

It took just seconds to get the score board moving - and for an opening period of five minutes visions of a repeat of the Middlesborough mauling sprang to mind.

Mitchell Thomas won the ball in the air inside Hatters' half, Biggins picked up the



● **Scott Oakes rounds the Oldham midfield**

loose ball and held off a challenge on half way.

The newcomer then delivered a perfectly weighted, incisive through ball which sliced open Oldham's defensive heart as effectively as a surgeon's knife.

Marshall burst clear of Steve Redmond and, with time to spare, drew keeper Paul Gerrard and measured a low shot into the corner.

He must have been practising on the training ground - far too many times this season Marshall's unquestionable pace has left him in clear goal scoring positions, only for indecision to strike in the final seconds.

A minute later Scott Oakes stole the ball on the left corner of the box and bent a banana shot that had more curve than EEC fruit regulations permit. A diving Gerrard palmed the ball round the post.

But those among the 6,903 crowd who thought they might be in for a Hatters onslaught were to be disappointed.

Off-sides flowed steadily and both sets of strikers had difficulties coping with the negative tactic. Only Marshall, for the opening goal, managed to spring the trap in the entire 90 minutes.

Oldham had their chances. Nicky Banger missed an open goal just before the break, somehow managing to spoon Andy Ritchie's cross into the arms of a stranded Juergen Sommer, who was standing wide of his left hand post at the time. Most relieved must have been Marvin Johnson, whose untimely slip inside the box had let Ritchie in.

Finally a period of second half pressure from the visitors was made to count, substitute Rick Holden firing through a ruck of players with 15



● **Dwight Marshall salutes supporters**

minutes left.

After that it seemed inevitable that Hatters would capitulate. But instead, for once, the luck went their way. Late substitute Tony Thorpe, on in place of Kerry Dixon, skied a long ball to the edge of Oldham's penalty area and Biggins was on hand to leap high and nod down into the path of Marshall, who only had the keeper to beat for his ninth goal this season.

Five minutes before the end Sommer was booked for time wasting, but Luton's defence held firm to give Hatters only their fourth League win of this year's campaign at Kenilworth Road.