

Aspirations met as Town triumph

Chesterfield 1 Luton Town 3
By BILL COLE

A CONVINCING Hatters victory came at the expense of a very poor Saltergate side, who must surely now be relegated.

Indeed, judging by the banners on display and the chants ringing round the ground,

manager John Duncan's future with the Spireites must be in considerable doubt.

It was men against boys in the first half as the Hatters ripped Chesterfield apart and, just for a change, capitalised on their domination to net three fine first-half goals.

The home side at least made a fight of it after the interval, with the Town cruising, and grabbed a lone consolation in the 76th minute.

The scene was set for the

destination of the points as early as the 48th second of the game.

Emmerson Boyce found Matthew Taylor and his pinpoint cross from the left wing was headed home in imperious fashion by the impressive Gary Doherty.

It could have been two in the seventh minute when Stuart Douglas was allowed to turn in the box, but his shot from ten yards had neither the power nor the direction to beat Mark Gayle's save.

A break out of defence led by Julian Watts after 17 minutes led to the second goal. Watts carried it fully 60 yards and laid a perfect pass in the path of Liam George with the outside of his right foot.

George's shot from an angle brought a superb flying save from Gayle, who pushed it up onto the bar, but there was no respite for the Spireites because Watts had followed up and was in position to head the rebound home.

Douglas then used his considerable pace to embarrass Steve Blatherwick down the right wing but with Doherty and Taylor unmarked in the middle and screaming for a cross, Douglas put the ball behind.

The first threat on the Town goal came on 36 minutes with Alan White off the field having attention to a head wound.

Jonathan Howard had been pushed up front in a wholesale team reshuffle by Duncan, he beat Watts on the outside and crossed well.

But with no other attacker anywhere near him, it flew across the goalmouth to safety.

That was a rare incursion into the Town half and George really settled the match five minutes before half time.

Douglas crossed more successfully from the right. Doherty turned his man and shot for George to net the rebound for his 16th of the season when Gayle could only parry at full stretch.

Matthew Spring had been rested

for this match and replaced Locke a minute before the break.

He had to face a much more determined home side in the second half.

Duncan had reshuffled his attackers and midfielders once again. This time Ryan Williams paired with Steve Payne made a much better fist of things.

Matthew Taylor, though, almost made it four on 51 minutes when his accurate sidefoot shot from 25 yards almost caught Gayle napping, but the keeper just managed to scramble back to save, Chesterfield began to give just as good as they were getting, Ben Roberts had to make a superb flying catch and Alan White had to head over his own bar to clear under considerable pressure to keep the sheet clean.

Fifteen minutes from time, the Spireites spoiled the Town's defensive performance when they scored from their first shot on target in the game.

Aided by a blatant handball on the edge of the box, Howard turned the ball past a couple of visiting defenders to crack a drive home past Roberts.

Williams immediately got away down the home left and eventually found Wilkinson at the far post. But Roberts was quick to advance and block.

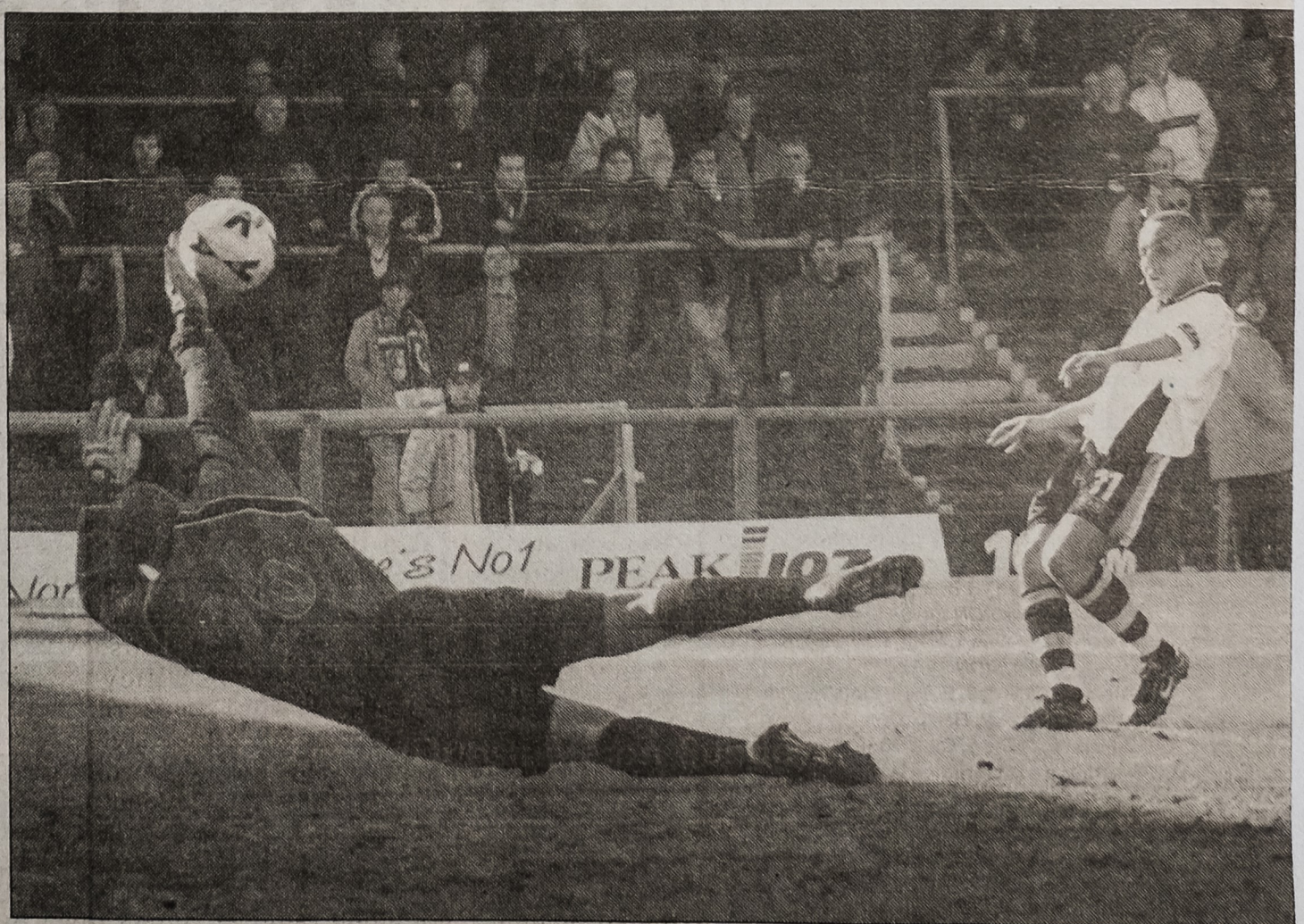
The Chesterfield fruitful five minutes ended right there.

The Hatters duly saw out time without further problems, Chesterfield's second shot on target coming with practically the last kick of the match. But, typically, it was from all of 35 yards and didn't trouble Roberts in the least.

Luton: Roberts, White, Watts, Johnson, Boyce, Taylor, McLaren, Locke (Spring 44), George, Doherty, Douglas (Fotiadis 70). Subs not used: McGowan, Ayres, Abbey.

Att: 2,597.

MoM: Julian Watts.



■ Julian Watts celebrates his header yesterday, as Liam George chips Chesterfield's keeper forr his 16th goal of the seasonn