

Prospects Brighter After Town's Tense Win

OLDHAM ATH. 0, LUTON TOWN 1

By CHILTERN

WITH another determined hard-fighting display, the Town brought themselves two points nearer to safety from relegation at Oldham last night.

Thus they continue their remarkable record of seven consecutive matches without defeat, during the course of which they have collected 12 life-saving points.

As a result of this victory, narrow and tension laden as it was, the Town's task in their two remaining matches should not be so difficult as was feared at one time.

In the main, this was a triumph for determined, dogged defensive work, especially in the second half, when there was more accent on defence and the need to hold the narrow advantage.

At times, the defence was in trouble, but they deservedly kept a blank sheet due in no small measure to the great confidence and anticipation of Baynham.

There was not the customary goal from O'Rourke, but it was not for the want of trying and both he and McKechnie were unfortunate with efforts that had "goal" written all over them.

There was nearly a sensational start because in the second minute following a free-kick for a foul on McKechnie, O'Rourke, with a fine header, forced Bolland to push the ball just over the bar, and from the corner, the centre-forward headed too high.

It was a quiet sort of start and Baynham was not brought into action until Craig tested him from 20 yards. In the next Town raid, McCall, harassed by O'Rourke, nearly put the ball too high for the advancing Bolland who only just managed to pull it down.

Some huddling about by the Oldham defence gave the Town forwards some hope, but the final covering was being quite adequate.

McKechnie had to go to the trainer's bench for attention to his right leg, but was in the thick

How The Goals Came

LOWNDS for Luton after 35 minutes.

of it immediately he returned. Oldham improved and after Pacey had kicked away at close quarters, Fizzell made a tremendous drive that dipped and struck the crossbar, after which the ball was sent for a corner by Lownds.

From the corner, Colquhoun headed wide.

The Town were finding difficulty in settling down to a smooth stride probably because of over-anxiousness, but they promised better things when first McKechnie then O'Rourke produced snap shots that went wide.

For a time the Oldham pressure mounted, but the Town came away through clever work by O'Rourke. Reid wasted time in trying to achieve a better position and in the end his shot rolled gently to Bolland.

Then came a narrow escape for Oldham when Whittaker came racing in to meet with his head a cross by Pacey. The ball struck Bolland, who just managed to push it away.

However, Oldham still looked likely to carry the more punch and Branagan, coming right up-field, gave Baynham a hot handful, too hot for him to hold in fact, and Lownds had to give away the third corner in as many minutes.

Brilliant work by Walden after he had been brought down heavily by Taylor led to a shooting opportunity for Pacey, but apart from the headers by O'Rourke and Whittaker, the Town's finishing had lacked crispness.

When McKechnie was pulled down well inside the penalty area, it looked like a penalty for the Town, but instead the referee gave an indirect free kick for obstruction.

It led to the Town taking the lead through LOWNDS after 35 minutes. Reid took the kick and seemed to have wasted it through waiting too long after the whistle had gone so that in fact he had to hit the ball across to Lownds, who from outside the penalty area, made a low drive that beat Bolland and got in through a crowd of players, just inside the post.

The goal was a badly needed tonic for the Town and there was nearly another when McKechnie took a pass from O'Rourke and Bolland had to go full length to push the ball for a corner.

From this, Oldham had the luckiest of escapes because O'Rourke struck the bar and from the rebound McKechnie also hit the underpart of the woodwork. There were strong appeals by the Town that the ball had crossed the line, but the referee, on the spot, ruled that it had not.

Ledger was off the field for three or four minutes, and then returned with plaster completely over his right eye. He was at outside-left and was welcomed back with a fine effort by Johnstone who forced Baynham to push the ball over the bar. Half-time.

OLDHAM ATHLETIC ... 0
LUTON TOWN 1

In the first minute of the second half a brilliant full-length save by Baynham prevented Craig from equalising. Then the Town defenders converged madly on Williams, who shot wide from almost point-blank range.

Oldham hit back again and Baynham was hurt when he was charged by Williams, and with the ball falling loose, Fincham put it behind to relieve a dangerous situation.

Again the Town were out of luck in a concerted attack when McKechnie had an effort hooked off the goal line. Whittaker had injured his side and was playing under something of a handicap.

Whittaker, whose effectiveness had been cut, shot inches too high in a swinging Town raid, and when Oldham retaliated Lownds was glad to kick behind as Craig was making a bee-line for goal.

This was followed by another corner and produced a deal of tension before the danger was averted. Next Town casualty was O'Rourke, who damaged his right knee in an unnecessarily hard foul tackle by Fizzell.

The centre-forward was able to carry on after attention and Bramwell's free kick had the ball bobbing about in front of the Oldham goal.

In the closing stages there was increased pressure on the Town goal and a narrow escape from a corner from Colquhoun, which Baynham failed to hold, but Williams sent the ball wide.

This was the nail-biting period with Oldham throwing everything in and the Town defence fighting doggedly to hold on to their narrow advantage. When the Town made some ground, McKechnie was pulled down from behind and Reid lobbed the free kick tamely over. Result:

OLDHAM ATHLETIC ... 0
LUTON TOWN 1

OLDHAM ATHLETIC: Siev-

lands; Branagan, Taylor; Siev-

wright, McCall, Fizzell; Ledger,

Johnstone, Williams, Craig,

Colquhoun.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham;

McBain, Bramwell; Pacey, Fin-

cham, Lownds; Walden, Mc-

Kechnie, O'Rourke, Reid,

Whittaker.

Referee: J. E. Carr (Sheffield).

Attendance: 6,367.