

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"John O'Rourke, 19-years-old son of a Dagenham docker—the Englishman with the vintage Irish name—was the two-goal hero of this tense, over-anxious struggle which lifted relegation-fighting Luton Town to safety but smashed Watford's last slim promotion chance beyond repair.

"O'Rourke has scored 21 goals in 22 games since Luton got him on a free transfer from Chelsea last December. What a wonderful signing."—"Sunday Express."

"In the first half there was some acceptable football, notably from Luton. With Reid and Lownds dominant in midfield and the young spritely O'Rourke pulverising Chung in the penalty area, it became easy to understand how their last eight games have yielded 14 points.

"From the post-Wembley ruins of 1959, in which time they have dropped from the First Division to the brink of the Fourth, the signs of a lasting revival are here for all to see."—"Sunday Telegraph."

"Happiest young footballer this morning is 19-years-old John O'Rourke, the Luton centre-forward whom Chelsea gave away on a free transfer.

"By scoring two goals in the last eight minutes of this thriller, he steered the Hatters out of the relegation zone and ended Watford's dream of promotion."—"News of the World."

O'ROURKE SHOCKED WATFORD WITH TWO LATE GOALS

Set The Seal On The Town's Remarkable Run

By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 2, WATFORD 1

FIRST League meeting at Luton between these local rivals for over a quarter of a century exploded into fierce excitement during the last ten minutes when the Town deservedly snatched two points that they had looked like losing.

Hero of the hour, not for the first time this season, was John O'Rourke, with the exception of Ray Whittaker, the youngest player on the field, and he finally wrecked the Hertfordshire club's hopes of Second Division football with two opportunist goals.

Not that Watford would have gone up had they won, because their goal average was inferior to that of Coventry, but before the match the issue was delicately balanced.

So it was so far as the Town were concerned, because they needed points to ensure their continuance in the Third Division. Yet, as it turned out, even if they had been beaten, they would still have been safe.

This victory was the culmination of a remarkable run that began on the Thursday before Easter and which netted 14 points out of the last 16.

In a first half that was edgy, and in which both teams were over-anxious because of the importance of the occasion, the Town had more poise and deserved to be ahead at the interval.

They were right out of luck in having a penalty claim disallowed when O'Rourke was pulled down blatantly by Nicholas, and there were one or two other borderline cases.

Best effort of the first half came from O'Rourke with a great drive that Jennings saved at full length.

It was a game that never looked like producing a crop of goals because of the spoiling tactics of both sets of defenders, but unexpectedly it was Watford who drew first blood nine minutes after half-time.

SURPRISED BAYNHAM

Spelman, for some reason or another on the left wing, suddenly crossed the ball, found HARRIS in an unmarked position, and the left-winger side-footed it past a surprised Baynham.

After that the Town attack lost much of its potency and not showing sufficient punch at close quarters to suggest that they could save the game.

However, we reckoned without the enthusiasm of O'ROURKE, who, ten minutes from the end, dashed through a gap in the defence to steer past Jennings a pass by Pacey after a free-kick by Fincham.

Mistakenly, Watford had fallen back on to the defensive, and they paid the penalty three minutes from the end when O'ROURKE scored from close range after Turner had made a shot at goal.

There were frantic appeals against the award on the grounds that Smith had handled, but the referee adhered to his decision after consulting a linesman.

Twice after that only Jennings prevented Watford going further into arrears when he made fine saves from Lownds and Reid.

This was O'Rourke's match, of course, but, at the same time, it was no one man show, even though the forward line as a whole was not at its best.

REID'S FINE JOB

Reid did a fine job of foraging and scheming to emphasise that the club made no mistake when they paid £13,000 for his transfer and he and O'Rourke can well be strong links in the Town's bid to rebuild some of their former glory.

Turner and Smith scarcely hit it off as a right wing pairing and Whittaker was too often caught in possession before he could part with the ball to be really effective.

However, it was not a day for footballing niceties because the tackling was hard and no quarter was asked for or given.

Defensively, the Town looked better organised than Watford, who were liable to panic under pressure, and Fincham made sure that Livesey did not become a danger or that he did not add to his considerable tally of goals.

From Lownds, there was a typical hard-battling display which was instrumental in breaking up many raids, but Pacey fell away after a splendid first half.

Dogged and determined, McBain and Bramwell did an extremely capable job and the only time Baynham seemed to be seriously at fault was when the goal was scored because it seemed to be taken by surprise.

LUTON TOWN: Baynham, McBain, Bramwell; Pacey, Fincham, Lownds; Turner, Smith, O'Rourke, Reid, Whittaker.

WATFORD: Jennings; Nicholas, Jones; Crisp, Chung, Owen, Spelman, McAnarny, Livesey, Oliver, Harris.

Referee: F Schofield, Morecambe. Attendance: 19,799.