

Crusader Comments

ON THE CAPITULATION AT CLAPTON

LUTON TOWN lost their return game with CLAPTON ORIENT on Saturday because they did not begin aright. On a ground that was much like the sands of the seaside when the tide has receded, and before the sun has done his part, there was need for plenty of boot to the ball; first-time passing, sprinting and shooting. Luton did not vary their game; they just continued for an hour in trying to play the mechanical type of game that must gladden teams of the kick-and-rush style of the Orient.

When the game was wearing late the Town altered their methods, and had there been a little longer to go they would probably have won well, for the Orient were tired, and could not cope with the pace of the Town forwards. Only by concentrating on defence then could the home side keep the spoils, and even then they were fortunate. It was an inspiring rally by the Town, but it came too late to be effective, if one cuts out the fact that the best opening of the match was missed.

The Orient set about their work in whole-hearted fashion, and it was just as well that there was a referee who could hold the players. Prompt use of the whistle meant a lot more work for the Orient defence, and as the game proceeded they realised that they could not take liberties. Some of the Town players, too, had good reason to recognise the fact, though they never threw themselves into their business in the same vigorous manner as their opponents.

Taking the run of the game, the Orient could rightly be said to deserve success; they took their chances quickly, and then held on hard to what they had earned or what fortune had given them. The first goal, indeed, was a most fortuitous affair. Kingham could have cleared, but allowed the ball to go past him from a long kick up the field, evidently thinking that Harford could get to the ball. It was too wide for the custodian, and Fletcher dashed on and then passed nicely for TRICKER to score a good goal.

After a few spasms by the Town, in which they showed the neater football without causing Wood many qualms, there was a bit of close play in the Town half, and as a result TRICKER snapped up the ball, and though Kingham just touched it with his foot, the shot sailed well away from Harford into the net. Almost at once the Town came down again, and the Orient suffered for a bad foul by Dudley. Clark took the kick, and sent into the goal-mouth, and Yardley tapped the ball down to the feet of SLICER, who shot a fine goal.

The Town had a good share of the play, but the forwards were rather too easily repulsed to lead one to believe that they would get level, and when, shortly before the change of ends, the home team went further ahead, the game seemed to be won. Fletcher, who was always on the alert, went away and centred finely, for FOWLER to shoot a splendid goal. Harford having no chance. So the interval came with the Orient leading by two goals, and with the wind in their favour for the second half.

For some time after the change of ends the Town maintained their first half methods of close and pretty play, but Slicer, who had gone to the extreme left, caused the home defenders a lot of trouble by his sprints and centres. Harford and his backs had some hard work, but they got through it in more business-like fashion, and the halves were also taking a more prominent part but the inside forwards were generally overwhelmed at close quarters.

Then came a rally by the Town, and their more open tactics soon had the Orient defenders on the run, but there was no lack of vigorous response by the home team, and Wood had not many shots to deal with. Yardley tried vainly to rush the ball through from centres, but his course was stayed by hefty opponents, and there was not much real promise of a goal for the Town.

A few minutes from the end, however, the Orient were getting very wild, and when Clark started M'Nestry on a quick dribble on the right there was real trouble. Dudley chased M'Nestry for about forty yards, and being too late to intercept his pass, tried to trip him. The referee was on the spot, and as the incident took place within half-a-dozen paces of the goal, a penalty kick was the decision. CLARK scored with a mighty drive.

Then the Town swarmed round the Orient goal, and there was a lot of wild work for the defenders, but they succeeded. Slicer's skill brought a hot scene in the goal-mouth, and Wood was lucky to see his goal escape. He was then drawn out of goal, and Slicer again put the ball in front for M'Nestry; the latter tried to push the ball in with the side of his foot, but got too far under it, and away it went, six inches too high. This was the last incident of note.

The Town defence again did very well indeed, though Kingham was responsible for the first goal. All three played capital football, and had more to do because of the comparative weakness of the halves. Fraser alone, in this department, was at his best, for McGinnigle could not hold the Orient's powerfully built inside forwards, and Clark found the pace of Fletcher rather too much, though he tried to give a hand in the middle work.

The experiment of playing Slicer at inside-left could not be called a failure, though he should never be drawn from his rightful position on the wing save in stress of circumstance. It was there that he played havoc with the opposition in the second half. Bryce did quite as well inside as out, and is preferable of the two for the position. M'Nestry did not have a good match, and Heslop, though trying hard, suffered from lack of opportunity. Yardley was a great trier, but met with little support.

There were 5,000 spectators.

CLAPTON ORIENT 3
LUTON TOWN 2

CLAPTON ORIENT.—Wood; Broadbent, Evans; Lawrence, Edmonds Dudley; Jack, Fowler, Tricker, Mills, Fletcher.

LUTON TOWN.—Harford; Hodgson, Kingham; Clark, McGinnigle, Fraser; Heslop, M'Nestry, Yardley, Slicer, Jack.

Referee.—Mr. E. E. Small, Bristol.

ORIENT 3
LUTON TOWN 1