

A HAT TRICK

TOOK THE GLOSS OFF LUTON'S REPUTATION

Orient Manager's Plan

LUTON TOWN failed to make good in their first League game of the season at Lea Bridge. They began moderately, and except for an inspiring spell just after the interval, they never looked like the winning combination that had been anticipated.

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THE DIFFERENCE between the teams could well be summed up in the fact that Luton wanted to play what has come to be regarded as first Division football, while CLAPTON ORIENT were just content to do their stuff in the manner expected of a Third Division club.

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PETER PROUDFOOT, the Orient manager, confessed after the game that he had drilled into his men that they were meeting a clever side; that they must swing the ball about, tackle quickly, kick hard and keep on the move from start to finish. He had good reason to be gratified with the reward.

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THE HIGH AND GUSTY WIND was not helpful to the Town's style, and as they had to face it in the first half they were a long time settling down to their work. They strove hard to get together, but a sharp intervention and a hard kick by an opponent reversed the advantage, and, therefore, the more pressure was seen on the Town goal in the first half-hour.

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IT WAS GOOD for Luton that Nelson was in sterling form in this period. Again and again he held up the rushes of the home forwards, his headwork especially being good, and Coen had only a very small amount of work. One or two efforts generated on the Town left wing threatened to overcome the Orient defence, but Hillam kept goal well, and his colleagues defended stubbornly, Affleck in particular.

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THE ONLY GOAL of the first half came when everyone expected the half-time whistle. Nelson made a valiant attempt to hold up the Orient inside forwards, but CRAWFORD managed to retain the ball, and as Coen was a yard or two out of goal the centre-forward lobbed the ball, and the Town goalkeeper got his hands to it, but could not arrest it, and it fell behind him into the net. The whistle went immediately the ball was kicked off.

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THE SECOND HALF saw a big change in the Town's play, for they swept down on the Orient goal again and again, and the home team had to concentrate on defence. It was touch and go for a long time. The Town halves played well up, and both Kingham and Mackey frequently came into the home half and dropped the ball in front of goal, but the defensive measures of the home side were never relaxed, and with Hillam keeping goal splendidly, there was no change in the score-sheet.

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STEPHENSON headed the ball on to the bar, and Beresford put in a grand shot which flashed across the goalmouth and



STEPHENSON

struck the farther upright, but did not go in. Both Ball and Stephenson had hard lines in failing to head through, and the centre-forward turned behind a pass from Stephenson which he met right in front of goal, though hampered by three defenders.

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IT SEEMED for a time that the Orient could not hope to survive, but they had an encouragement that was the best rallying call they could receive. Nelson had to run out to the left to tackle an opponent, and while he and Edwards were down Crawford snapped up the ball and went hot foot on the left wing. Kingham ran up the middle, and this allowed CRAWFORD to go unchallenged, and eventually cut in; there was no pace about his shot, but Coen let it slip from his grasp.

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MORE PRESSURE from the Town followed, but try as they would, they could not overcome a gallant defence, and Hillam kept goal finely. At one time I counted ten of the Orient men in defence during an attack, but so sharp were they that when the ball was sent out the forwards were all well up when the ball reached the Town goal-mouth.

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THE LAST GOAL came in almost similar fashion to the second. Nelson was again compelled to go out to challenge the Orient left, and the ball was swung past him; Mackey could not stay it, and CRAWFORD took it as it came from the full back just inside the Luton half, and he went on to beat Coen with a shot at which the goalkeeper threw himself full length in a vain effort.

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PACE AND ENTHUSIASM beat the Town. They were lacking understanding in defence, and penetration in attack. The third back game adopted by Nelson was cleverly played, or would have been, had his backs rallied round him while he was tackling. They did not cover him, but kept wide apart, giving almost all their attention to the wing man.

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COLQUHOUN played too far up the field for my liking in view of the pace and resolution of the opposition, and Kidd acted on similar lines. The latter, however, put up a brilliant show in the last half-hour, and endeavoured to pull the game out of the fire.

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STEPHENSON had no equal as a wing forward, though Crompton played well when he got the ball. He had few passes in the first half, and all the inside forwards were slow and lacking the fire necessary against rugged defenders.

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THE TEAM as a whole needed sharpening up all round; their football was better than that of the Orient, but there was no plan to counter the more go-ahead tactics of the opposition. Had the team started with the determination they showed in the first twenty minutes of the second half they would have achieved a different result.

HILLAM did as much any anyone to thwart the Town forwards. He kept goal cleverly. His backs were steady and resolute under pressure, and kicked hard, never waiting to place the ball. Affleck did very well at centre-half, and the wing halves were worriers.

CRAWFORD was a real opportunist, and his mates of the front line played up to his purpose well.

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There were 10,000 spectators.

CLAPTON ORIENT	3
(Crawford 3)	

LUTON TOWN	0
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ORIENT.—Hillam; Searle, Herod; Heine-mann, Affleck, Ware; Miles, Pateman, Crawford, Farrell, Edwards.

TOWN. — Coen; Kingham, Mackey; Colquhoun, Nelson, Kidd; Crompton, Beresford, Ball, Roberts, Stephenson.

Referee: L. Boulstridge, Tamworth.