

DEFENCE SHUT OUT DESPERATE ATTACK

Kelly And Bramwell Were Town's Stars

By CHILTERN

LEYTON ORIENT 0, LUTON TOWN 0

THE tension was on at Leyton last night when the Orient were seeking the precious points that would increase their chance of First Division football next season. It showed in the anxiety of their football and for much of the time they fell easy enough victims to the Town defence which was in its dourest mood.

This despite the fact that a late change was necessary because on arrival at the ground John Groves complained of back trouble and Bob Morton, one of the travelling reserves came in almost at the last minute.

Only on rare occasions in the first half did a goal look likely and on balance the Orient were just the more dangerous. Standen made great saves from McDonald and Graham, while Foster twice shot over the bar.

To say the least, the Town's forward play was sketchy, primarily because they tended to keep the ball too close and through the inaccuracy of their passing.

Even so, they had two distinct chances, one of which McKechnie failed to accept because of slowness off the mark and the other fell to Fleming. His shot was saved full-length by Robertson, and from the rebound the winger centred dangerously, but the Orient defence had covered up.

DESPERATE ORIENT TURNED ON HEAT

Desperate Orient really turned on the heat at the start of the second half, and Dunmore missed the far post by inches. In the 52nd minute this volatile crowd which numbered 21,292, one of the biggest of the season, erupted when McDonald hooked the ball into the far corner of the net.

Nothing looked more certain than that it was a legitimate goal. But the referee on a signal from the linesman disallowed it and awarded the Town a free-kick just on the goal-line, presuming an off-side against Dun-

him quite the most unpopular person in East London. For much of the second half the Town were on the defensive, and Standen saved well from Deeley, who began to wander to some tune.

There was always the possibility of a snap Orient goal, though their finishing was far from good, and Deeley missed two great chances, once heading straight at Standen and then shooting over the bar from close in.

Towards the end the Town came more into it and Ashworth missed a possible chance at close range, though the ball ran a little awkwardly for him. On the other hand there was an anxious moment at the Town end when Bramwell just managed to put the ball behind for a corner as Deeley closed in dangerously.

At one time there was a distinct threat of tempers becoming frayed, but better counsels prevailed and the players settled down again. It was not surprising that this element should creep in because there was much at stake for the Orient, and it showed quite plainly in their general jitteryness.

Towards the end a lot of the fire went out of the Orient attacks, though Standen had to be quick to catch a centre from Taylor and avoid a charge by Bailey at the same moment. Then with bare minutes remaining the fury returned as the Orient realised that a precious point was slipping away from them.

Then the Town broke away and McKechnie, though not being sharp enough off the mark missed a chance from a through-pass from Turner, who seconds afterwards bore into goal on his

favourite angle and ballooned the ball behind.

In almost the last minute, an amazing clearance by McNally deprived Bailey of what would have been a golden chance and the Town defence was holding on like grim death.

Half the crowd shouted "goal" when Dunmore cracked away first time at a centre by McDonald, but when all the shouting was over it was seen that the ball was the wrong side of the post.

And that was just about the last kick of the match.

This was a hard-earned point for the Town and a great start to their holiday programme. It enables them to view the struggle at the foot of the table with a great deal more detachment than seemed possible before the start of this match.

It was earned purely by the strength of the defence, which gave a completely satisfactory display.

Outstanding were Kelly, who put Dunmore out of the game completely, and Bramwell, who seems to have improved 50 per cent since the responsibility of captaincy was given to him.

Neither put a foot wrong throughout, but the others were little, if anything, behind. McNally was in complete command, Pacey as ebullient as ever both in defence and attack, and Morton did his part in a rather quiet way.

STANDEN WAS RELIABLE

Behind them all, Standen was completely reliable, making four or five first-class saves, and his handling of the ball was extremely good.

Forward I would like to report an improvement, and an end to some of the current problems. To do so would be unduly optimistic and most untruthful. The inside trio, hard though they worked, built up little in midfield and there was not much thrust at close quarters.

On balance Fleming, though he often used the ball badly, did as well as anyone, but on the other hand he had far more of the ball than did Clarke, who suffered badly from lack of support.

This was a point which was won courageously and well by sheer determination in defence.

LEYTON ORIENT: Robertson; Charlton, Lewis; Lucas, Bishop, Lea; Deeley, Taylor, Dunmore, Graham, McDonald.

LUTON TOWN: Standen; McNally, Bramwell; Morton, Kelly, Pacey; Clarke, Turner, Ashworth, McKechnie, Fleming.

Referee: J. R. Loynton, Solihull.