

Offside tactics anger crowd

By CHILTERN

68/69

IN a dour and scrappy first half the Town had great difficulty in finding a way through the massed Orient defence, and there was not a great deal of action in either goalmouth.

The crowd showed their resentment at Luton's repeated use of the offside trap, and at the other end the Orient were always ready to halt the Town's advance by the most robust methods.

There was another big following of Town supporters—probably even more than went to Gillingham last week.

With Terry Branston and Mike Harrison still not ready to return, the Town fielded the team that drew at Brighton on Wednesday, except that Freddie Jardine, fit again, returned to left-back for Billy McDerment, who became substitute.

Branston travelled with the party, and told me he is hopeful of being fit for Wednesday—he expects to be able to take a fitness test on Tuesday.

Harrison was also at the match, and he, too, feels he has a chance of being ready in midweek.

Of the 14 players named by Orient yesterday, Key and Rofe were omitted, and player-manager Jimmy Bloomfield, who has been on the injured list, nominated himself as substitute.

SCOUTS PRESENT

Among the crowd were scouts from Nottingham Forest, Tottenham, Coventry City, Swindon Town and Brighton.

In Branston's absence, John Moore again captained the Town.

Moore won the toss, and the Town were first away through a great crossfield pass

Tickets for replay

Tickets for Wednesday's League Cup replay were going like hot cakes at Kenilworth Road this morning, and secretary Bob Readhead reminded supporters that the club's offices will be open from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock tomorrow morning.

by Lewis, but French could not control the ball.

Orient's first raid in any strength ended with the Town defence moving up smartly and catching Halom offside. From the free-kick, Sheffield menaced the Orient goal and received a round of applause for getting in a shot from a difficult position.

When Sheffield was sent away again he was badly brought down by Mancini midway in the Orient half, and the free kick was touched sideways by Allen to Rioch, whose drive was charged down.

In these early stages the Town were showing up well, and they had another free kick for a foul on French, but Goddard pulled down the winger's high lob.

Once again the covering was tight, and the tackling hard.

BIRTHDAY CHANT

Rioch tried to put an end to this with a speedy run which ended with him being brought down by Harper some yards outside the penalty area. He was well off the target with his free-kick.

Even so, a section of the Luton supporters appreciated the effort because they began to chant "Happy birthday to you"—Rioch was 21 yesterday.

With a quarter of an hour gone neither goalkeeper had been seriously tested, and that looked like emerging as the pattern of a game which was proving to be dour in character.

Maybe the liveliness of the ball was partly to blame, but the passing of both teams was not of high quality, and this was not helping achieve real continuity.

Brabrook once looked dangerous when he rounded Dougan, but the ending was anti-climax as he placed the ball behind from a good position.

Obviously, the winger could be a threat to the Town given the right sort of service, and he sparked off another raid during which Rioch brought down Halom some ten yards outside the penalty area.

Mancini went up and headed Brabrook's free kick high and wide.

When play swung the Town's way again, Lewis neatly headed on to Sheffield a long clearance kick by Read, but the centre-forward's shot from outside the penalty area was deflected for a corner, which French wasted by placing behind.

Dougan came across to save a nasty situation with a quick clearance when Massey had been left with a chance by Allen.

Sheffield was working hard, and he earned another corner, again on the left. French did better with the kick this time, though the rush for the ball came to a premature end when Sheffield was penalised for pushing.

Much of the passing was still sub-standard, and to add to the frustration of the home crowd, the Orient forwards were being caught offside all too frequently.

LYING DEEP

Halom was lying very deep, and Massey and Slater were the Orient strikers. So deep was Halom that Rioch was mostly picking him up in mid-field.

Inability to control the light ball was causing many raids by both teams to break down, and play was pretty ragged and scrappy.

After half an hour came the first casualty. Massey developed a heavy limp which received treatment from the trainer.

Goalmouth action was still sparse, and Read easily saved a lob from Halom. The Orient crowd were far from happy about the way in which their forwards were being caught offside, and were expressing their dissatisfaction vocally.

Ryan, who had been little in it, sent Rioch through down the inside-right position, but the most he could manage was a corner. Ryan placed the kick well, but it was cleared by Orient's massed defence.

Someone in the stand behind me shouted, "Let's have some football. Give us our money's-worth." In the next minute Moore did his best to oblige with a searing first-time drive from 25 yards that tested Goddard to the full—in fact he caught it only at the second attempt.

EASIER TASK

Read had a far easier task in catching a long free-kick by Jones. Then Jardine joined in the attack after gaining possession luckily, only to have his feet swept from under him by Harper.

As the attack continued French gained possession and there was ironical applause from the Orient section of the crowd when he was pulled up for offside.

Whenever a Town forward

TEAMS

ORIENT: Goddard; Jones, Howe; Harper, Mancini, Taylor; Slater, Massey, Allen, Halom, Brabrook. Substitute: Bloomfield.

LUTON TOWN: Read; Dougan, Jardine; Allen, Slough, Moore; Ryan, Lewis, Sheffield, Rioch, French. Substitute: McDerment.

Referee: G. McCabe, Sheffield.

got anywhere near the vicinity of the penalty area, it was a safe bet that he would be brought down. Sheffield was when he embarked on an ambitious run, and again the free-kick, taken by Rioch was charged down.

At this stage there was a distinct suggestion of the Town getting on top, but breaking through the Orient defence was proving a tough assignment.

MOORE SHOT

Moore was trying to set an example with his shooting, and another from the region of 25 yards went too high.

With about three minutes to go to half-time, Orient were awarded an indirect free kick only yards outside the penalty area. Brabrook centred it into the goalmouth and Halom made a header that Read saved comfortably enough.

Half-time:

ORIENT 0
LUTON TOWN ... 0

For the start of the second half Orient player-manager Jimmy Bloomfield came on for Massey, who had received a knock in the first half.

Dougan tried the overlap which he performed so successfully at Gillingham, and although it did not quite come

off this time it at least kept the Town on the attack until French, harassed by two opponents, found himself penalised for a foul.

For the first time Jardine missed his tackle on Slater, and it brought the first dangerous Orient move so far, with Halom kneeing the ball goalwards. Read made a smart save.

The referee had a word with Slough after a foul on Halom which gave Orient a free kick just inside the Town half. Jones planted the ball firmly into the penalty area, but too far forward, and Read was able to come out and intercept.

Fouls were still a frequent occurrence and there was one against French on Jones out near the touchline, and again Read was able to cut out Slater's cross.

INCHES WIDE

Then came a great effort by Rioch who latched on to a clearance which rebounded. As Goddard came out desperately, and the Orient defenders closed in, Rioch shot for goal from 20 yards and then watched the ball curl inches wide. It was a splendid opportunist effort which came near to breaking the deadlock.

Slough was having something of a battle with Halom, and was penalised again after the inside-left had floored him in the first place.

There was more persistent pressure from Orient now than at any previous stage, and Slater missed a great chance by shooting over from 15 yards after the previously immaculate Town defence had been pulled right out of position by Halom.

Another free-kick when French tackled Slater from behind brought Mancini up into the Town goalmouth, but the cross was too high for him.

When the Town came away again a back-pass by Peter Allen was very nearly intercepted by Lewis, and Mancini had difficulty clearing.

French was injured when he came back to make a rackle. He apparently damaged his back, and looked in some pain.

After treatment on the field, he was taken over the touchline, and the Town continued for the time being with ten men. However, he was quickly back.

BOOING

When Orient were again caught offside, slow hand-clapping and booing broke out from the crowd. When Dougan was caught in two minds near the centre line, Bloomfield gained possession to race through and make a centre to which Moore dived to clear.

Then the Town had a stroke of bad luck in the 65th minute when they had a goal disallowed. It was made by Lewis, who picked the ball up smartly on the left from a throw-in and made a deceptive shot that Goddard, challenged by Sheffield, could only help into the back of the net.

The Town's joy was quickly turned to despair when it was seen that the referee had given Orient a free-kick—presumably for obstruction by Sheffield on the goalkeeper.

With 67 minutes gone French, still feeling the effect of his injury, was brought off and McDerment came on at outside-left.

Just before he left, French had put the goal in jeopardy by an ill-judged back-pass which Jardine could not reach and Slater missed a good chance by sending over.

Now the Town were beginning to settle down again, but gaps were still extremely difficult to find in this close-packed defence.

FIERCE DRIVE

Rioch showed his worth with a fierce right-footed drive from the edge of the penalty area that beat Goddard completely, only to miss a post by inches. There were appeals by the Town that the ball had been deflected for a corner, but a goal-kick it was.

Orient now switched wingers in an effort to find a way through the Town defence. Leighton Buzzard, on Mo for the Eastwick Cup match, only 157 turned on petitors, only 200 con been made for 200 con Although provision ha

less than expected