

Town smash back to shatter The Orient

IN ONE of the most fantastic finishes to any game at Kenilworth Road, Luton Town slammed three goals in 12 minutes to pip Orient after being 2-0 down and heading for defeat.

Luton's proud record of 30 home games without defeat came so near to being shattered until a goal from Collins sparked the dramatic climax.

Graham French and Malcolm MacDonald completed the Hatters' scoreline.

Brian Lewis, last season's top marksman, was left out of the Luton side and today's line up was that that won at Bournemouth last week.

Lewis was substitute with Laurie Sheffield and Malcolm MacDonald spearheading the attack.

For The Orient, former England international Peter Brabrook, right winger Malcolm Slater and half back Dave Harper beat injuries to play today.

The match was televised by Anglia TV for screening tomorrow afternoon. The Londoners brought a noisy following for the short drive up the motorway.

Blustery

Luton were led out by the smallest mascot they have yet produced. He was tiny five-year-old Andrew Cumming, of Westoning. The ball for the match was donated by comedian Eric Morecambe, a keen follower of the Town.

A blustery cross-field wind did not help as Orient 'keeper Goddard found out when the second kick of the match, a long high one from Keen, brought him into instant action.

MacDonald was soon in the thick of things working hard to win a throw and then lobbing the ball into the goalmouth from touch. Again Goddard had to act quickly.

The Orient goalkeeper received a nasty-looking injury in the third minute when he dived bravely between Sheffield, who was racing in fast, and a full back.

The referee had a word with Sheffield for the way in which he went in, but Goddard resumed after treatment, although he looked to be in some pain around the chest.

Twice former Watford player Barry Dyson incurred the displeasure of the crowd with long back passes to his goalkeeper and the second one resulted in a booking for the enthusiastic Sheffield.

Snap header

As Goddard gathered the ball the Luton centre forward bowled him over with a fair and square shoulder charge. But referee Nicholson gave Sheffield a good talking to before jotting his name down in his notebook.

In the eighth minute, MacDonald very nearly put Luton ahead with a snap header to Keen's free kick. He beat the defence in the air but his effort went wide.

Two minutes later MacDonald darted through the

Orient defence to intercept a cross-field pass, chased it forward, drew Goddard off his line and struck the side netting with a good left-foot effort.

The referee proved unpopular when he awarded Orient a free kick on the edge of the Luton box for some obstruction from an earlier one by Taylor.

I am not sure what the offence was for but it brought Orient a goal and a 14th minute lead.

Mr Nicholson, quite rightly made the Luton defensive wall stand the statutory ten yards away and full back MICK JONES ran up and hammered the ball hard through the Luton rank past the unsighted Read into the net.

It's 'magic'

Taylor was injured in a collision with Sheffield halfway between the Orient penalty box and the middle and lay prostrate for more than a minute before the referee stopped play for a throw-in.

But despite his theatricals there didn't seem a great deal wrong with Taylor after a dab with the "magic" sponge.

French was a threat from the left wing and three times he put the Orient defence at sixes and sevens with well-placed centres. From one, Sheffield just managed to reach it but Allen had bad luck with the rebound.

The referee was proving to be not the most popular man in Luton and twice he ignored the advantage rule when Luton might have made better from the running situation than they did from the resultant free kicks.

A long free kick from Slough produced energetic efforts from Sheffield and MacDonald but the ball just did not seem to be running for the Town as they plugged away at the Londoners' goal.

But Orient full-back Rofe worked a good overlap with Harper and slashed across a dangerous centre which Branstons did well to head over the crossbar for a corner. This came to nothing.

Packing

The visitors were proving masters at packing their defence and relying on break-aways for their raids at goal. As soon as Luton started to make ground The Orient filled their penalty area with ten men. There looked few ways through it for Luton by using pure football methods.

But after 31 minutes MacDonald again went very close to equalising. Slough started a good move from the left, his centre was headed down by Sheffield and Goddard was caught unawares as MacDonald sped in to shoot.

The ball struck the goalkeeper's body, and spun out to the byline from where MacDonald took another shot against the rigging, before it went out of play.

Then, in the same minute, Read did well to push over a high ball from the left which had caused the Town no end of trouble.

TEAMS

LUTON TOWN: Read; Ryan, Bannister; Keen, Branstons, Slough; Collins, MacDonald, Sheffield, Allen, French.
Sub: Lewis.

THE ORIENT: Goddard; Jones, Rofe; Taylor, Mancini, Harper; Slater, Bullock, Allen, Dyson, Brabrook. Sub: Plumé.

Referee: Mr F. M. Nicholson (Manchester)

GOAL SCORERS

JONES (Orient) 14 mins
BULLOCK (Orient) 60 mins.
COLLINS (Luton) 74 mins
FRENCH (Luton) 80 mins
MACDONALD (Luton) 86 mins.

For the second time, the referee got in the way of the ball and he took Dyson's name for saying something to him.

A foul by Mancini on Sheffield resulted in French putting across a well-placed free kick which MacDonald headed over the top.

With Luton trying desperately to pull back a goal before half time, MacDonald swung across a perfect centre and Sheffield, who was well placed, headed inches wide of the far post.

With the referee looking at his watch Bannister floated yet another free-kick into the goalmouth and MacDonald beat Goddard with a back-header but this time saw his effort shave the outside of a post.

HT: Luton Town 0
The Orient 1

Keen's passing had not been all it could be and as a result



Laurie Sheffield in trouble. The finger-wagging preceeded his name going in the book.

Collins was not getting much of the ball.

When he did get it early in the second half he worked a splendid move with Sheffield, who found French with an equally good crossfield pass. Bannister worked hard on the overlap and got a centre in but again Orient had fallen back and cleared the ball.

A long, high centre from Keen resulted in French winning a corner but he didn't place it very well and Orient had little trouble in clearing.

Inswinger

The pattern continued with the Town making all the running and winning corners but the forwards were having the greatest difficulty in beating the blockade set up so effectively by Orient.

A corner from French swung in viciously and a full-back did well to head off the goal line. But the referee would have none of Town's claims that the ball had crossed the line.

As Luton failed to score the crowd set up a chant of "We want Lewis". And as if in defiance MacDonald headed a Keen cross from a narrow angle against the crossbar.

Orient were employing a new cunning time-wasting tactics which did not please either Luton or their fans.

In spite of their defensive efforts Orient were still able to produce some dangerous attacks from time to time and in the 60th minute they went further ahead through inside-forward BULLOCK.

Chip shot

A weak tackle by Bannister let Dyson through and the winger tested Read, who had to make a flying dive to stop the ball entering the net. It went out towards the right and Slater chipped it into the middle for Bullock, who was not being very tightly marked, to head down past Read from point blank range.

The Town's 30-match unbeaten record was looking in a decidedly dangerous position.

In the 63rd minute the crowd's wishes were answered when Brian Lewis was sent on to replace Laurie Sheffield.

But the time was running out for Luton and with 25 minutes to go they were looking a bit unsettled. Gone was a good deal of their earlier composure and Ryan was the third man to be booked, this time for a foul on Brabrook, who at the time appeared to be making an abortive run in the wrong direction.

Ryan's frustration can be understood as the Town looked to be losing their grip.

After 75 minutes Luton hit back. It was Allen who, characteristically did all the hard work and JOHN COLLINS who put the ball in the net.

Allen fought his way down the left, won a rebound, cut round the back of the defence and shoved the ball past Goddard for Collins to stab it home.

With just ten minutes to go the crowd went wild when GRAHAM FRENCH scored one of the most welcome goals of his career.

A real gem

A long clearance from Read was headed on by MacDonald and Allen fought for possession in front of goal. The ball was cleared out to French, who cleverly spotted that Goddard was out of position and, cool as you like, he calmly hit the ball over the top of the defence and into the empty net.

It was a gem of a goal and no more than both French and Luton alike deserved.

With only four minutes to go Keen swung across a free-kick and there was the effervescent MACDONALD fighting his way through the packed defence to head home and put Luton into the lead.

Attendance: 13,761