

Two goals, but Town could have had more

LUTON TOWN 2, ORIENT 0

ONCE again, there was the somewhat familiar story at Kenilworth Road on Saturday of the Town not fully translating their general superiority into goals. Indeed, at one time, there seemed dire danger that another home point would be conceded.

However, all came well in the end, with Alan Slough breaking the deadlock with his second goal of the season and the late calling into action of Jimmy Ryan dramatically laying on another for Givens.

On this occasion, there was more excuse than previously for the Town taking so long to break the ice, because Orient, obviously defensively-minded, were certainly efficient within their penalty area, where the covering left little margin for error.

It followed that most of the chances that fell to the Town were scarcely of the

With Orient in rugged mood, and tackling hard, there were frequent stoppages for fouls, mostly by the Orient, and some of the interruptions which prevented an even flow of play, I regarded as unnecessary.

Givens booked

And the referee, quite rightly, came in for criticism for booking Givens, who showed dissent in a mild sort of way, after being pulled up for dangerous play.

The fact was that Bennett went to head a ball no more than knee height as Givens tried to gain possession with his foot, as he was perfectly entitled.

There was more justification for the name of Orient's Harris going into

the referee's book and, like Givens, it was his third caution of the season.

With stalemate continuing in the early part of the second half, even though Givens was pushed up to give close support to Halom, with Anderson playing wider on the wing, the breakthrough came from a completely unexpected quarter.

Credit to Keen

Much of the credit for the goal, which came after 62 minutes, belongs to Keen for his persistence in chasing the ball down the left wing. He pushed it inside to Moore, whose centre produced a rush and it was SLOUGH'S head that flashed it into the net.

One would have expected, after that, that Orient would have come out in search of a quick equaliser, but, although they slightly reinforced their front runners, there certainly did not appear to be any decisive change of tactics.

At all events, there was no imminent danger to the Town's lead although, of course, there was always the need for further insurance in the form of another goal. It came almost immediately after Jimmy Ryan had been sent on as substitute for Anderson nine minutes from the end.

Spectacular

Then, with his first touch of the ball in League football for 11 weeks, Ryan made a slide-rule centre that was spectacularly headed past Goddard by his former Manchester United club-mate GIVENS.

Shortly before that came, there was another booking, with Hoadley the sufferer this time, for a particularly innocuous handling offence when danger could not even remotely be said to have threatened.

With reservations about the matter of goal punch, this was a pretty workman-like performance by the Town. They were altogether more ambitious and creative than their opponents, who always seemed to be too

heavily committed to preventing the Town from scoring.

Shrewd Halom

One would like to see goals coming from Halom who, however, in their absence, is justifying his inclusion by his hard work, which includes some shrewd laying off when, as frequently happens, he finds the way to goal effectively blocked.

For once in a way, Anderson could find few loopholes, so that he had little to show for his industry.

Hindson contrived to find more space for himself, and brief as was Jimmy Ryan's appearance, it must have given food for thought, because there is no doubt that he is a class player.

This was the Town's fifth match without defeat, and it may be more than coincidence that the run began with the recall of Court, who is playing solidly, and the improvement of Keen, which has given the Town more command in midfield.

More mobility

Aiding in this is Givens in his comparatively new role, which has brought more mobility to the whole side, which now seems to have a more sound foundation.

Whether or not it was imagination, because they were not fully put to the test by Orient's attack, I thought, at times, that things at the back of the defence were not so dominant as usually they are.

During the first half Nicholl appeared to be pulled out of position, whether by accident or design was difficult to say, and Moore seemed not all that certain.

Not that it amounted to anything. Both overcame the phase, if it really did exist, and there was a more solid display, that was encouraging, from John Ryan, with Slough making his usual effective contribution.

What it all added up to in the end was that Read was scarcely called upon seriously, and there was no doubt that the Town thoroughly well earned their victory.

● Town's leader VIC HALOM gets up high to try to head the Town in front in the first half against the Orient on Saturday.



Givens there

● DON GIVENS can rise to it, too, as he shows in this tussle with the Orient defence.

LINE-UP

LUTON TOWN: Read; John Ryan, Slough; Keen, Nicholl, Moore; Anderson (Jimmy Ryan), Court, Halom, Givens, Hindson.
ORIENT: Goddard; Jones, Rife; Bennett, Hoadley, Harris; Fairbrother, Allen, Bullock, Walley, Bowyer, Substitute: Riddick.
Referee: R. Crabb, Exeter.
Attendance: 9,193.

clear-cut variety, and usually it was a case of making a split-second decision on the finishing method.

Six times during the first half, the Town came measurably close to taking a deserved lead, beginning in the second minute when Halom headed just too high after a fine movement by Givens and John Ryan.

Over it goes!

Eight minutes later, Court would probably have opened his account had he opted to head a lobbed pass from Keen instead of lifting it over with his foot as Goddard advanced.

Good use was made of the through pass, and it was from one by Halom that Hindson forced Goddard to make the save of the match, with probably the best shot to be produced.

Twice, Halom was not all that far wide of the target. By contrast, Orient, whose first recognisable shot at goal was delayed for 23 minutes and then came from Walley, failed to cause Read the slightest concern through the first 45 minutes.



● SLOUGH put the Town in front after 62 minutes to round off good work by Keen and Moore.