

SLOUGH BREAKS THE DEADLOCK

LUTON 2 ORIENT 0

ONCE AGAIN in a dull, uninspiring first half, Luton looked as if they would never find the net. But Alan Slough changed all that after the break.

He rose to head home a centre from John Moore in the 62nd minute and Luton finally made sure of both points when Givens grabbed a second minutes from full time.

The Saturday before Christmas is traditionally the worst day of the year for football crowds.

By
ROGER DUCKWORTH

And today looked as if it was going to be no exception with Christmas shopping commitments taking their toll on the Luton gate.

Luton were unchanged and Jimmy Ryan was again named substitute.

For Orient, skipper Peter Bennett was able to play after an eye injury threatened to keep him out.

But one familiar name was missing from the Orient side — Mark Lazarus. The Orient substitute was former Luton centre-forward Gordon Ridgick.

Former Watford man Tom Walley, who was transferred to the London side recently, started the ball rolling with a long run towards the Luton goal but he was stopped in his tracks by John Ryan.

Luton hit straight back and fine cross from John Ryan was met by the head of Halom and his excellent effort went just over the crossbar with Goddard at full stretch.

A couple of minutes after Court had been the victim of a rather dangerous high kick from Walley, he hit back by tripping the Watford man. The referee did not appreciate this and gave the Luton man a good talking to.

Luton had a let off in the tenth minute when Allen beat Nicholl for speed and put a low ball into the Luton goalmouth.

Everybody stood back waiting for an offside flag that never came and it was nothing more than a casual Luton foot that flicked the ball into the hands of the surprised Read.

Super save

Court hit straight back for Luton and after a clever crossfield move he volleyed his shot over the crossbar from a good position.

Despite these isolated incidents it was a somewhat sleepy start until the 14th minute when Hindson broke through and fired in a fine shot which Goddard worked miracles to stop.

The Orient keeper somehow managed to get the end of his fingers to the top right-hand corner of the goal and divert Hindson's effort for a corner.

And Luton came back again. Hindson sent Halom down the left wing and the centre-forward produced a peach of a cross, aimed for Anderson, which a defender managed to turn into another corner.

After a lull in play, Walley got a neat return from a throw-in and cut in to the corner of the penalty box before putting a low shot wide with Bullock bearing in to try to finish the job off.

Court was having a good game for Luton but he was

also getting some rough treatment and from one incident just outside the penalty area he was fouled by Harris. Hindson's low free kick was flicked wide by Halom.

In the 31st minute referee Crabb earned himself a giant boo when he booked Givens for dissent. The Luton player was only pointing out that he had been tackled rather high and no sooner had he said anything than he raised his hands to show he knew he was wrong.

And Mr Crabb's book was out again in the 37th minute when he booked Harris for a trip on Halom.

It was not long before the slow handclap went up but it was not for what the players were doing — or not doing — it was directed at the referee.

HT: Luton 0, Orient 0

After an uninspired first half Luton began the second looking as if they knew they had to do something urgently to ensure some decent gates in the New Year.

A good cross from Givens was reached by Goddard just before Halom could get in on the act and then when Orient hit back John Ryan did well while playing with only boot on to get the ball back to Read.

Hindson started one of Luton's best moves of the

match and it continued via Slough and Givens until Harris put the ball behind for what surely must have been a corner.

Mr Crabb did not enhance his already ragged reputation in this match by giving Orient a goal kick.

In the 58th minute a move instigated by John Moore was ruined by him in the end. He sent Slough away and the full-back's cross was fisted clear to Keen. He put the ball back to Moore, who was outside the penalty box, but he completely mis-hit his shot which went some 25 yards wide.

In the 62nd minute Luton ended the deadlock with a well-headed goal by SLOUGH. Keen passed to Moore whose centre into the crowded goalmouth was met by the forehead of Slough giving Goddard no chance whatever.

The goal against them meant that Orient had to go out and attack if they wanted to reap any reward and this they did. In a hectic five minutes they stretched the Luton defence somewhat but the Town held out and began to attack again.

With ten minutes to go the referee, almost unbelievably, booked Hoadley for the most delicate of handling offences in midfield.

With nine minutes left Jimmy Ryan went on for his first taste of first team football since October 2 when he substituted Peter Anderson.

With just about his first touch Jimmy Ryan set off down the right and flashed across a beautiful centre for GIVENS to head in a spectacular goal in the 83rd minute.



Goddard collects a centre from the left with Halom in close attendance

VERDICT

By **ROGER DUCKWORTH**



JIMMY RYAN will remember his comeback from a long period of injury for a long time.

There were nine minutes to go when he came on as substitute this afternoon and two minutes later he put over one of his famous crosses for Givens to climb spectacularly and head a magnificent goal to clinch Luton's victory.

But it was a goal that the fans needed. Until then Luton had just about deserved their Christmas bonus which looked to be coming to them from a well-headed

goal by Slough in the 62nd minute.

But it was not a good game of football. Not good, that is, until the last ten minutes when Givens scored his goal and when Tony Read made a fantastic full-stretch save to a shot from Bullock.

Ragged

The Orient had made it hard going for Luton by some positive defending, and the Luton attack had found it almost impossible to break down this solid wall until full-back Slough took a hand in

things just after the hour.

Until then the match had been ragged, full of petty fouls and with an angry crowd hurling abuse at the referee who made some strange decisions.

Two of the strangest were the booking of Givens in the first half for an almost imperceptible show of dissent and for his booking of Hoadley in the second half for an equally innocuous handling offence right in the middle of the field.

He also booked Harris for a heavy foul but this

one was more justified.

Court was Luton's outstanding player with an admirable show of strength and ambition from a midfield position where he was never afraid to attack.

And up front, Halom worked hard throughout in his search for those elusive goals and Hindson turned on some second half skills that delighted the crowd.