

Way is open for Kid Cunningham

Orient 2,
Luton Town 2

74/75
(7C)

THIS sparkling Texaco Cup encounter did much to back up Orient manager George Petchey's prediction that this could be the season in which teenage winger Laurie Cunningham arrives on the second division scene in a big way.

The coloured youngster from Finsbury Park was brought on as a late substitute for Barrie Fairbrother — and within minutes laid on the O's face-saving equaliser.

Time was running out for the home side when kid Cunningham exchanged passes with Bobby Fisher on the right before sending over the perfect cross for Gerry QUEEN to glance home a header three minutes from time.

Following impressive outings on Orient's pre-season tour of Holland and a fine display in the Texaco Cup match with West Ham, the 18-year-old wingman did enough in the last 15 minutes on Saturday to show he will be pressing for a regular first-team spot this season.

"It was great to play a part in the goal so soon after coming on but Bobby Fisher must also take a lot of the credit," said modest Cunningham, who was once rejected by Arsenal.

Seventeen-year-old Fisher was also impressive for Orient but it

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was old hand Tom Walley who took the honours with a skilful midfield display.

The classy Welshman tested Luton keeper Graham Horn with a blinding 35-yard free kick as early as the fifth minute and Derek Possee and Mickey Bullock also went close as Orient called the tune in the opening stages.

Another WALLEY long-range effort opened the scoring for O's in the 21st minute when he collected Barrie Fairbrother's short pass and hammered a tremendous 25-yard drive which left Horn standing.

Orient, with Ray Goddard replacing the injured John Jackson, continued to press at the start of the second half and stand-in skipper Ricky Hepolette was unlucky when his snap drive rebounded off the crossbar.

But Luton, with Peter Anderson outstanding in midfield, gradually began to show flashes of the form which won them promotion last season, and they rocked the O's with two goals in as many minutes.

A bad back pass from Hepolette let in Jimmy HUSBAND for the equaliser and then Barry BUTLIN outjumped Paul Harris to head home a Don Shanks cross and put the visitors ahead.

Ten minutes later, Luton brought on substitute John Aston for Jimmy Ryan and the former Manchester United winger was given an unfriendly welcome by Fisher with a late tackle that earned the Orient youngster a booking from referee Ron Challis.

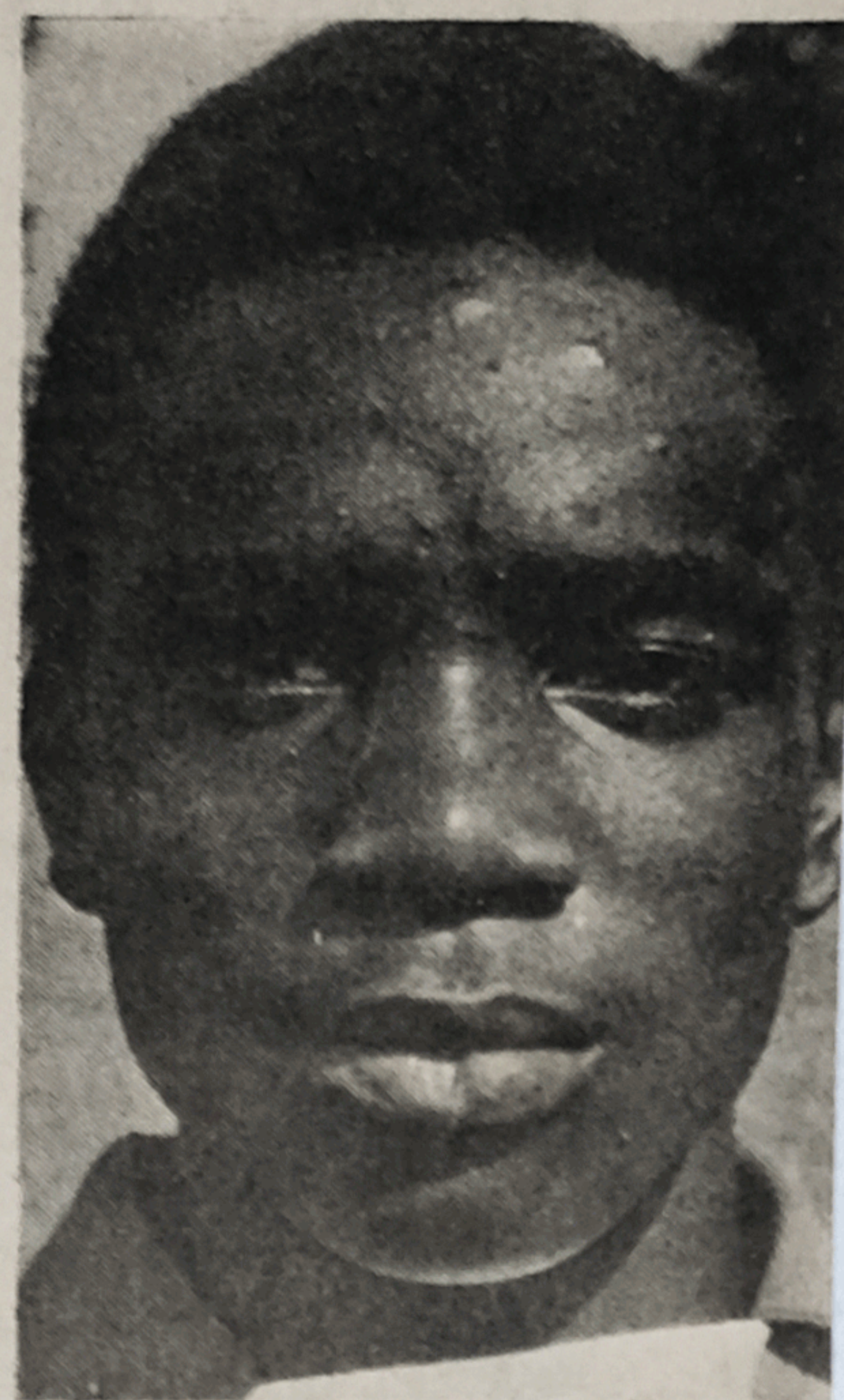
The O's luck looked right out when another Walley shot spun off the Luton defensive wall and hit the post after Queen touched on a free kick.

But their football was rewarded when Queen scored the late equaliser which made sure Southampton and not Luton, qualified for the Texaco Cup quarter finals.

Attendance: 5,443.

Orient: Jackson 7, Fisher 8, Roffey 7, Hoadley 7, Harris 6, WALLEY 8, Fairbrother 6, Hepolette 7, Bullock 6, Queen 7, Possee 7. subs. Cunningham, Goddard.

Luton Town: Horn, Shanks, Thomson, Anderson, Litt, Garner, Ryan, Husband, Butlin, West, Hindson. Subs. Aston, Barber.



● Laurie Cunningham — laid on Orient's equaliser.