

Luton miss a place in the last eight



Orient full-back Bobby Fisher and Luton's Gordon Hidson compete for the ball

A GOAL three minutes from time robbed Luton Town of victory over Texaco Cup no-hopers Orient.

Orient, the only team in the cup who knew they could go no further whatever happened today, led from the 21st minute and seemed set for victory with powerful attacking football.

Don Shanks, the man who spent the summer down in Australia, was again in the Luton defence this afternoon. And John Ryan was missing with an injury.

And it was a strange sight to see John Aston on the substitute's bench along with Keith Barber, the number two goalkeeper.

A bright sun and a noisy crowd greeted Luton to East London and the Town, encouraged by their previous results against Southampton and West Ham were soon on the attack.

In the very first minute Jim Ryan took a pass in midfield and advanced to fire in a tremendous shot which the surprised Jackson did well to catch against his chest as he fell to the left.

With John Faulkner missing for the first two games of the season because of suspension, Steve Litt carried on at centre half and some spritely play

Orient 2 Luton 2
By ROGER DUCKWORTH

early on underlined the fact that he had got over the injury he collected during the week.

Mess

After Luton had shown much promise in the first few minutes, Orient brought themselves back into the game and Horn did well to block shots from centre-half Harris and centre-forward Bullock as the Town defence got itself into a rare old mess.

And a minute later, a direct free-kick by former Watford man Walley was fisted away by goalkeeper Horn when he might have done better to catch the ball. He was genuinely surprised by the force and accuracy of the shot and Luton did well via Garner and Shanks to boot the ball to safety.

But the Londoners came straight back and a corner on the right was left free by the Luton defence for Bullock to get in an eventual shot after two of his colleagues had messed the thing up in front of goal.

So after only eight minutes Orient could have been leading 2-1 had all the available chances been made use of.

In the 11th minute a well-hit corner from the left by Possee again caught Horn on the wrong foot and though he got a hand to the cross, Bullock fired in a header which went narrowly wide.

Horn again chose to fist rather than catch a centre from full-back Roffey and again he looked unsure. There were harsh words being fired between members of the Luton defence, and the Town goalkeeper was never so glad as when he caught cleanly a hard free-kick from the right wing by Hoadley.



Bobby Fisher, the Orient full back, heads away during a Luton attack

For a quarter of an hour Orient, still in the Second Division vacated by Luton in May, looked the more complete side. Because of the pressure by the London forwards Luton were not able to get going with any thoughts of attack from midfield.

And it was the old story — when they were going backwards they did not look nearly so composed.

Eventually Luton won a corner and it was well-directed into the goalmouth from the right-hand flag by Hindson. Unfortunately for Luton, Walley was just as alert and headed the ball over the crossbar for a second corner which produced nothing in the form of optimism for the Town.

With Luton's real lack of forward thrust and with Orient's sheer and obvious delight in attacking, it was no surprise when the Londoners went ahead after 21 minutes.

The ball was moved up the right hand side and WALLEY took a nice pass in his stride, looked up, and then thumped a powerful dipping shot into the top of the goal with Horn — off his line — left a despairing figure with up-raised arms unable to reach the shot.

Anderson went on one charge through the middle but he had little hope of getting to

the ball before colliding with goalkeeper Jackson, who initially looked badly hurt but who was able to continue after a dab with the sponge.

Orient hung on to their attacking ideas and a centre from the left by full-back Roffey caused Luton further consternation and won another corner which almost produced another goal, again from a cross. This time Bullock could not quite get his foot to the ball.

Things looked up a little bit for Luton when a long centre by Shanks was headed behind for a corner by Orient centre-half Harris. Jim Ryan put over the corner, an inswinger from the left, but it was crisply headed clear by an efficient Orient defence.

Five minutes before half time, referee Challis appeared to have given Luton a free kick on the edge of the box after Butlin had been fouled on the way through. But after a linesman called him over for a chat, the referee reversed the decision and gave the free kick to Orient.

With a minute to go to half time, Luton were most unlucky not to equalise. Anderson robbed Queen in midfield and sent Hindson away on the left. His centre was well placed and Butlin jumped high only to head wide

from a good scoring position. HT: Orient 1, Luton Town 0

The only change in the line-up at half-time was by Orient who substituted goalkeeper Rad Goddard for Jackson, hurt in the collision with Anderson in the first half.

Again Orient were the first to attack, and it took a good tackle by Thomson to keep out Fairbrother.

With the half less than a minute old, the ball was banged back to Heppollette following a right-wing corner and the Indian-borm former Preston player hit Horn's crossbar with a tremendous drive.

Orient continued to test Luton with imagination from the right where Fairbrother and young Fisher both played with considerable flair.

In the 55th minute, Horn made a spectacular flying save to a hard shot from Roffey and the Luton supporters in the crowd had their hopes kept alive as they prayed for a Luton revival.

And that revival looked like being sparked by a ghastly mistake from Orient.

When there was no danger at all, the usually well-composed and efficient Heppollette tried an unnecessary back pass to his goalkeeper. The ball never had the length and HUSBAND nipped in

sharply took the ball in his stride, dribbled coolly round the left of Goddard and stroked the ball into the empty goal with his left foot.

This was just the break they needed and two minutes later Shanks crossed cleverly but strongly from the right and BARRY BUTLIN did the thing he is best at — jumped high above centre half Harris and headed strongly past Goddard to give Luton the lead.

But there was no joy for the Town a minute later when they went for number three. Hindson's free kick from the left, almost a corner, was easily caught by Goddard without much of a challenge.

Yet another Orient corner caused Horn some trouble and after he had blocked the cross, Butlin was on hand to clear strongly. From this, Anderson broke through with a dangerous run and cut inside before shooting hard at Goddard who tipped the ball over the top.

For the second time in a minute, Thomson did a good robbery job on Bullock to ease the pressure on the Luton goal and in the 70th minute Aston had a warm-up run on the touchline before stripping off his track suit. He went on in the 72nd minute at the expense of Jimmy Ryan.

Ryan did not look too happy at being taken off and after giving a fed-up sort of gesture with his right hand, he stripped off his number seven shirt as he left the field and walked straight up the tunnel to the dressing room.

In Aston's first run he took a dreadfully late tackle from Fisher who was booked for his trouble. The free-kick was given some five yards outside the Orient box and clipped across the goalmouth by West, only to go straight out of play for a goal-kick.

In the 76th minute, Walley tried another of those tremendous drives but this time it sailed over the crossbar and Luton kept their lead.

But then Walley had a free kick deflected on to a post after a rare "steps" offence by Horn, and Queen scored a well-deserved equaliser with three minutes to go, heading in a curling cross from the right. But who, may I venture to ask, was marking him?

Luton will have realised from this performance that this sort of stuff will be no good at all in the First Division. After the match everyone was aware of it.

Verdict

AFTER looking on the wrong end of a good thrashing for most of the first half, the turning round rather luckily just one goal down, Luton pulled themselves together at Brisband Road this afternoon.

Facing a stiff wind they were not in it in the first half, and suffered a goal deficit from a long shot by Tom Walley.

But to be honest, I would like to have seen more of Aston who immediately attacked from the left-wing and twice caught the Orient defence on the wrong foot with that familiar double shuffle and hard centre.