

PETCHHEY APOLOGISES FOR CHEATING THE FANS

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GEORGE PETCHHEY, honest-to-god manager of defrauding Orient, had the guts to walk into Luton's dressing room after yesterday's Bank Holiday goalless bore, and apologise to Luton boss Harry Haslam for the way his side had played.

For Orient had cheated 11,000 fans out of a good day out by playing 11 men in defence. It was grim stuff, and hardly excusable even when you are desperate for a point.

The Luton manager said: "We weren't good in attack. A couple of the forwards — and I'm not naming names — can do a lot better than that. Even so, it's very difficult to break through when teams pack their penalty area like that."

The trouble is that the extra point would have left Luton's promotion hopes on a high plain despite Saturday's defeat at Chelsea, for a lot of the results went right for the Town.

And last night Chelsea took a welting at Charlton to leave the chase wide open.

Misdirected

The Luton fans, intensely disappointed at what they were watching, did a bit of booing and slow-handclapping, but they were largely long-suffering. I felt sorry for them.

The finger of accusation must be pointed at Orient. Even centre-forward Peter Bennett played in the back eight. If this is entertainment by some of the best footballers in the country then I'd sooner watch the kids on the rec'.

If Luton don't go up, I hope Orient go down. We don't want to watch this sort of thing again next season.

What irritated everyone was that Luton did not have the invention to carve their way through. Orient moved full-back Bill Roffey across to the right to look after John Aston, and he did a tight-marking job, especi-



The blind leading the blind . . . Orient defender Bill Roffey and Luton's John Aston prefer to remain in the dark as they go up for this high ball, which has eluded Orient keeper John Jackson's clutching fingers.

ally in the first half.

In the second Aston found a way round on several occasions, but Luton's hopes usually disappeared under the carpet through a misdirected cross or a wild header in the goalmouth.

Jimmy Husband couldn't keep the ball on the ground, where he likes it best, and his honesty in effort was annulled by ineffective finishing.

But I give full marks to David Geddis, ever-searching for an opening and battering his heart out against a wall of frustration. He must have ended the day

black and blue.

I thought Lilly Fuccillo was the best of the midfield three. But he was pulled off in the second half for Ron Futchter to have a go. No wonder he looked surprised.

Haslam explained later that he had removed Fuccillo to leave space on the left of midfield for Buckley to use, and to get on another forward to feed off the full-back's crosses.

Off target

Neither Brian Chambers, nor Alan West were at their best, and the defence decided it had to try to bypass the middle three to feed the attack.

It was all very untidy, and long backpasses to the keeper by Luton's two centre defenders did nothing to appease the mood of a crowd bent on seeing Luton have a go for promotion.

For the amount he had to do, goalkeeper Aleksic needn't have got changed. I

think he had one soft header and a high cross to catch in the second half.

In the absence of the injured Price, Graham Jones worked hard on the right. But too many of his centres were off-target. Even so, he worked hard, tackled crisply and looks to be emerging as another first team regular, who has come up through the ranks.

Paul Futchter always looked to be in the thick of the action — even prompting the forwards from midfield — but not everything went right for him. His passing did not always carry its usual penetration but, to be fair, it was the fault of his colleagues not reading his intentions on

several occasions.

Faulkner, again strong in the air, tried to stir the attack, and ended looking as desperate as his mates. It was a desperate day all round.

When he was introduced Ronnie Futchter tried hard to work a clearing in Orient's defensive jungle, and wasn't pleased when he supplied Husband with a brief chance, after a strong run on the right three minutes from time, to see the striker lash it over the top.

Five points dropped out of the last six has taken the gleam of promotion out of Luton's eye. But it's still a possibility. Two points tonight are essential.

MATCH DETAILS

Luton: Aleksic; Jones, Buckley; Chambers, Faulkner, Paul Futchter; Husband, West, Geddis, Fuccillo (Ron Futchter 63 mins), Aston.

Orient: Jackson; Fisher, Roffey; Payne, Gray, Roeder; Possee, Glover, Bennett, Grealish (Chiedozie ht), Whittle.

Referee: A. Robinson (Waterlooville).

Attendance: 11,066.

Bookings: Bennett (Orient) foul on Fuccillo. Payne (Orient) time-wasting. P. Futchter (Luton) deliberate hand-ball. Geddis (Luton) foul on Possee.