

SAINTS' OMENS RIGHT

By RADFORD BARRETT

Luton 1 Southampton 2

LAWRIE McMenemy, Southampton's manager, had a splendid exit line at Luton as he set off to follow his team's fans home — and the best part of 10,000 of them turned up at Kenilworth Road.

"For those of you interested in omens," he said in accents of purest Geordie, "we played at Orient the last time we set up promotion." That was in 1966.

And at Orient tomorrow night Southampton have the chance to get a stranglehold on the Division II title, let alone promotion. A win there would also give them a good base upon which to build victory over Spurs at The Dell on Saturday.

That would give their South Coast neighbours, Brighton, who must be fancied to win their last two matches, both at home, a glittering chance of Division One football.

At Luton, Southampton showed the spiky aggression and cool professional skill that wins championships. Luton were not easy to quell, even after Carr damaged ankle ligaments, and tension ruined the first half.

Many bad tackles

It was like shaving in a shattered mirror—untidy, frustrating, and dangerous. But the second half made up for it, though there were still too many bad tackles and too much arguing.

Ball, combative as ever and forever seeking the enemy's weak spots, both tactical and psychological, was one of five bookings, for a foul. Wells (dis-sent), Peach, Fuccillo and Ron Futch, all for fouls, were the others.

Aleksic, handicapped by damaged ribs, was not troubled by shots in the first half, but could not near MacDougall's solid header off Ball's free-kick in the 53rd minute. Hill struck by coolly cashing in when Boersma sprang the off-side trap (64 minutes) and set up a superb finale.

Inexperience robbed Luton when Stein outflanked Peach but overhit his centre, Aleksic saved them by tipping over Boyer's rising drive, and good big match nerves clinched the points two minutes from time.

Ball was floored by Paul Futch as he controlled Funnell's pass, and Peach slammed in the penalty. It was his 38th successful conversion in a row—and, by a whisker, more important even than the one with which he clinched Saints' FA Cup Final appearance two years ago.

Luton.—Aleksic; Carr (Jones 25min), Price, Hill, McNichol, Futch, P., Stein, West, Futch, R., Fuccillo, Boersma.

Southampton.—Wells; Andruszewski, Peach, Williams, Nicholl, Pickering, Ball, Boyer, MacDougall, Holmes, Funnell.