



IT'S a case of aerial ballet as Raddy Antic dives full length with Orient's Tommy Taylor in a battle for possession.

HILL SPARKS A REVIVAL IN THE TOWN'S FORTUNES

A quick glance at the Second Division table may suggest that Luton have turned the corner after a last minute goal from Ricky Hill gave the Town a precious 2-1 victory over Orient at Kenilworth Road on Saturday.

It was the second successive season that Hill has scored in the dying seconds to sink the London team and, on Saturday, there were distinct signs that the Town are beginning to bubble.

The old failing of not finding the back of the net was evident for most of the 90 minutes and, although Yugoslavian international Raddy Antic was given the role of an emergency striker, I expect manager David Pleat to make a move to solve his scoring problem this week.

Antic looked the best bet for the central striker's position after Pleat had previously given Steve White, Frank Bunn and Godfrey Ingram the opportunity to make a claim for a regular first team place.

With White now available

LUTON TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Grealish, Saxby, Price, Hill, Stein, West, Antic, Moss. Sub: Ingram.

ORIENT: Day; Fisher, Roffey, Taylor, Gray, Parsons, Chiedozie, Moores, Mayo, Bowles, Margerrison. Sub: Hughton.

ERIC HARRIS WITH LUTON

REFEREE: B. Stevens (Gloucester). **ATTENDANCE:** 8,506.

GOALS: Stein (55), Hill (89), Moores (56). **BOOKINGS:** Margerrison (dissent), Roffey (foul on Donaghy), Fisher (foul on Donaghy), Donaghy (dissent).

for transfer, Pleat's permutations up front are still almost unlimited. But the Town's display against Orient did nothing to remove the suggestion that a bustling centre forward is still the manager's biggest priority.

Luton again proved that their attractive build-ups will still continue to present serious problems to any opposition this season. But the fact that Orient contributed to an entertaining game must be put on record.

Orient manager Jimmy Bloomfield refused to accompany his shattered team back to London. Instead, he took the opportunity of staying in the Luton boardroom for two hours after the game, enthusing over the afternoon's entertainment with Pleat.

Bloomfield, one of the best

managers in the game when it comes to talking tactics, said: "We try to play open, entertaining football and I think we succeeded this afternoon.

"I felt tremendously sorry for my lads after holding Luton until half-time when they were attacking their favourite end. At the break, I felt we were in with a chance of taking both points, but it was shattering to concede a goal in the last minute after we had done so much."

The Luton fans may have been frustrated by the occasional pass which went astray. But that deficiency was removed by build-ups which had Orient in frequent trouble during the first half, although the Town again failed to emphasise their

superiority by putting the ball into the net.

It was almost unbelievable how the Town didn't go into the dressing room at half-time with a commanding lead. Mike Saxby won a fourth minute corner; Mal Donaghy shot wide; Brian Stein walopped a shot against the post after 20 minutes; Hill knocked an effort into Mervyn Day's arms; David Moss's fierce shot was dropped by the keeper and Tony Grealish just failed to find the target.

It was a chronicle of missed chances throughout the first half with Orient offering little resistance with Jake Findlay enjoying a rare afternoon off.

But Luton's pressure finally paid off after 55 minutes when Orient were

threatening to take control. The move started with Hill's strong run which culminated with his final shot being hacked clear. But the ball ran loose to Stein who headed past Day's outstretched fingers.

The crowd were still buzzing with delight at that effort when Orient immediately hit back to equalise.

John Chiedozie had been a continuous pain in Luton's side on the right and had kept Mal Donaghy at full stretch after the little Orient winger successfully took advantage of some superb passes from Stan Bowles.

Chiedozie flicked over another tantalising cross and, this time, Ian Moores ran in to beat Findlay with an excellent header.

That may have provided Orient with the signal to erect the shutters and attempt to play out time for a point. But, to their credit, they continued to create the chances in their desperate search for the winning goal.

It almost came four minutes from the end when

Bowles was guilty of what could be the worst miss of the season. He made easy work of the hard bit by playing a neat one-two with big Joe Mayo and ran on after receiving the return pass.

He had already raised his arms to salute what everyone thought must surely be a goal — but his effort flashed agonisingly wide of Findlay's right hand post.

That miss proved to be extremely expensive as the Town won a corner in the last minute. Moss floated the ball over and Orient succeeded in only half clearing the effort to the edge of the 18 yard area. Antic knocked the ball forward to Hill whose header rebounded out from the underside of the bar.

Hill reacted like lightning to nod his second effort past Day. Orient barely had time to kick-off before referee Stevens signalled time.

It was a shattering blow for a team which had contributed so much to a fine game although there was little doubt the Town shaded the match.