

EARLY GOALS SET UP SEASON'S FIRST WIN

But Orient are let off too lightly

Report by
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HAVING cheered up their supporters no end with a couple of early goals, the Town kept everyone on tenterhooks in the second half as Orient were all but let off the hook.

But the first win of the season was well deserved, with the niggling worries about penalty-area power pushed into the background by a team performance which left Orient more outplayed than the 2-1 scoreline suggested.

Jimmy Bloomfield, the likeable manager of the London side, had the grace to smile when he claimed that his team might easily have salvaged a point.

He accepted that the Town earned the victory, but added that Orient might easily have gone two up in the first five minutes, when Mike Saxby and Jake Findlay got into a tangle dealing with a header by Billy Jennings and when Alan Whittle's cross was hit too hard for Jennings to meet the ball with any accuracy.

Having got away with those early scares, the Town settled down to control the midfield and put a lot of pressure on Orient's goal.

The build-up was occasionally magnificent, and the return of Alan West gave Ricky Hill and Tony Grealish more freedom to get up in support of attacks.

Grealish responded to the challenge of the first match against his old club with his best performance for the Town, particularly in the first half.

He made a vital interception in midfield to set up the first goal. His pass put Ricky Hill in possession, and Orient's makeshift defence, weakened by

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 2, ORIENT 1

Half-time: 2-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Saxby Price; Grealish, Hill, West; Stein, Hatton, Moss. Sub: Aizlewood, not needed.

ORIENT: Day; Fisher, Roffey, Mayo, Taylor; Margerrison, Hughton, Coates; Chiedozie, Whittle, Jennings. Sub: Grey, not used.

THE GOALS: Bob Hatton, 20 minutes, flighted shot over the goalkeeper from the edge of the penalty area; Ricky Hill, 27 minutes, beating his man after controlling hard through-pass by Mal Donaghy; John Margerrison for Orient, 55 minutes, very well-taken shot from Mayo's flick-on.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town nine saved, 12 off target and "goal" by Brian Stein disallowed because Hatton was offside; Orient six saved and three off target.

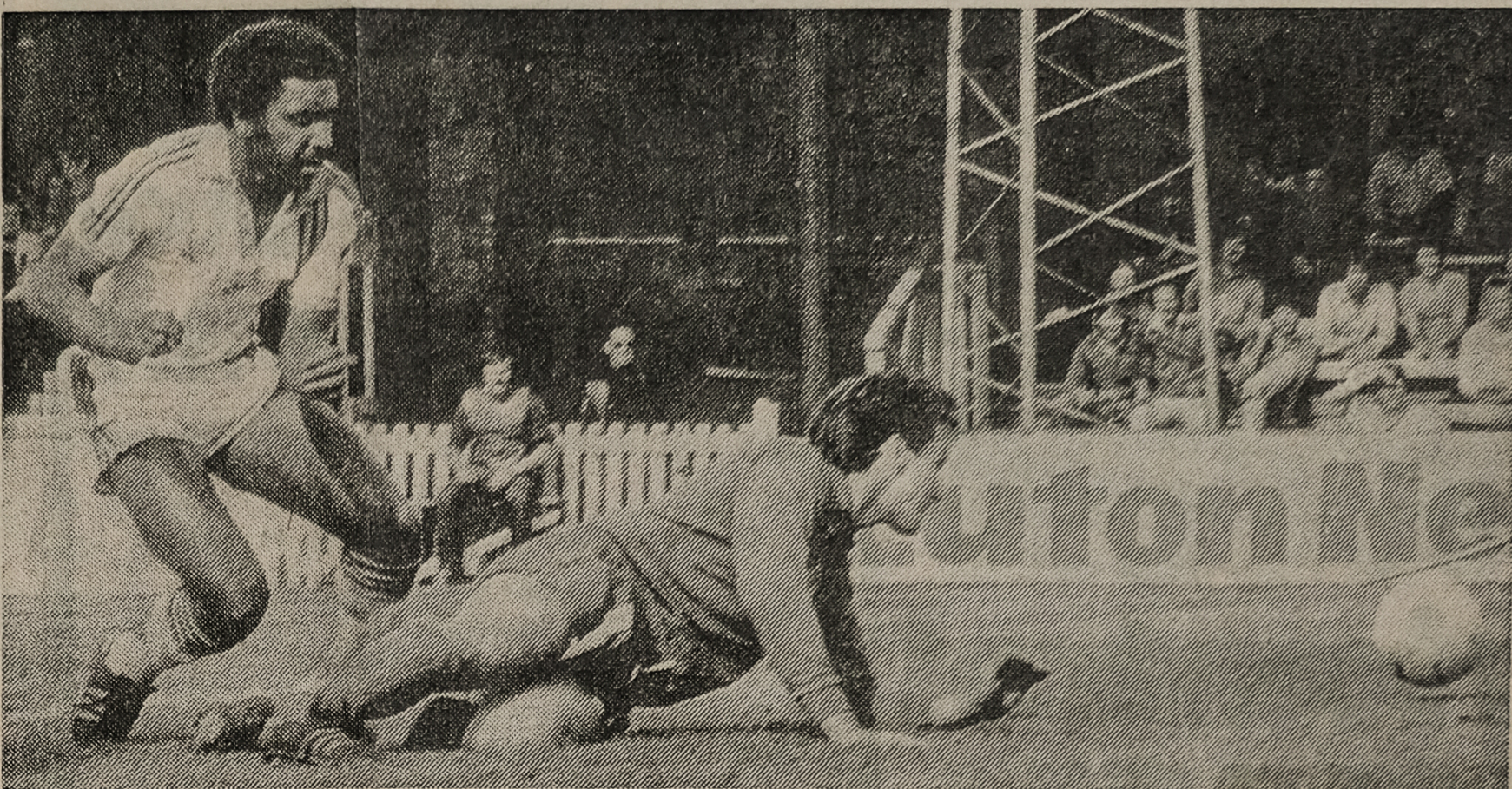
ATTENDANCE: 6,705, lowest of the day in the Second Division.

ENTERTAINMENT: Easily the best yet this season in terms of the Town's build-up work, but the finishing failed to match the approach play.

REFEREE: Ken Baker, Rugby—played his part well in a high-speed game.

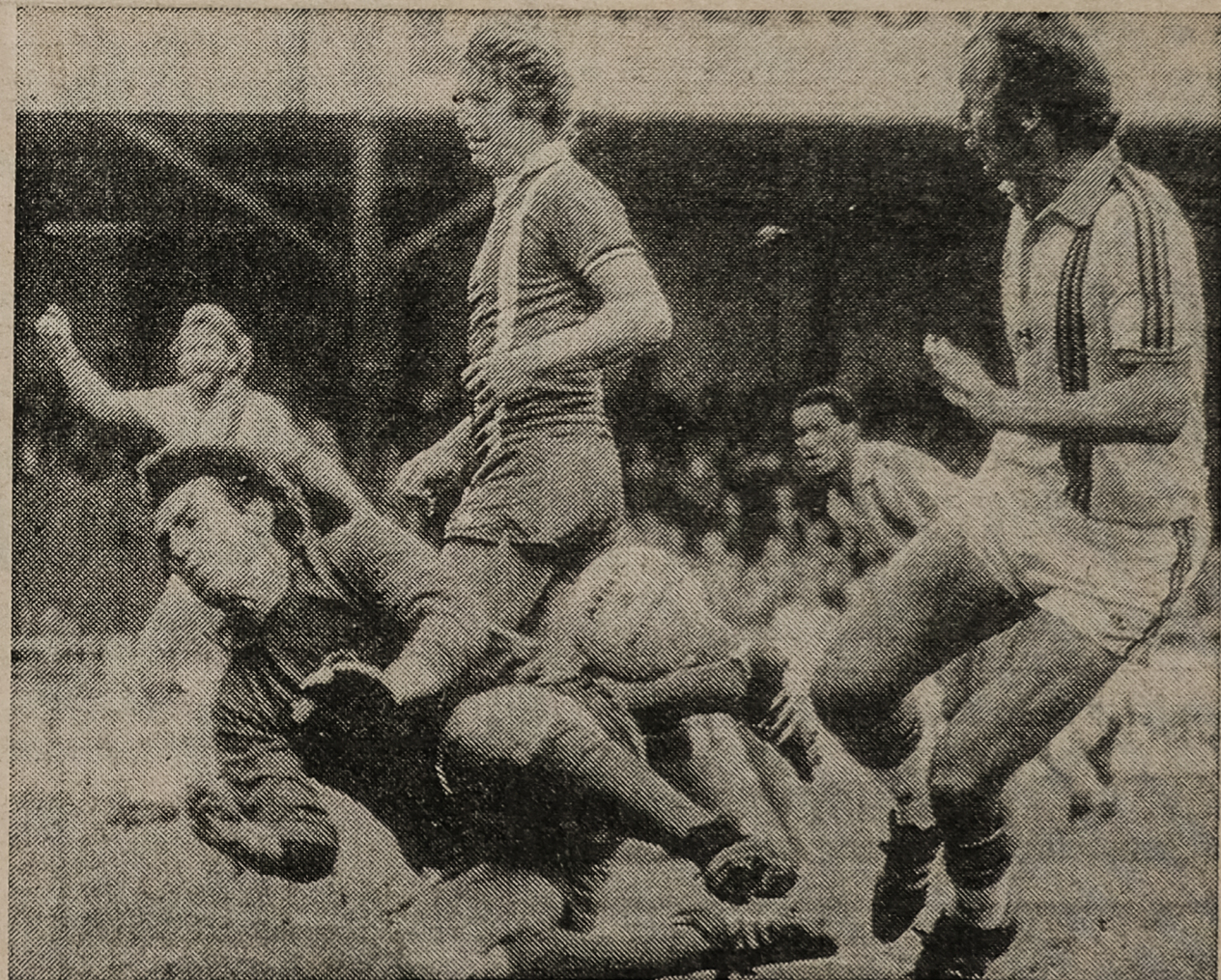
BOOKINGS: Paul Price for tripping John Chiedozie; Henry Hughton of Orient for a foul on David Moss.

injury absences, gave Bob Hatton the time he wanted to let the ball bounce before looping a clever drive over Mervyn Day into the net.



● **TWO UP:** Ricky Hill bursts through the Orient defence to leave Mervyn Day helpless as the Town's second goal goes in.

Below: One that didn't make it—Day blocks Bob Hatton's effort, with Tony Grealish in the background hoping for the ball to break in his direction.



Aizlewood, another full-back, on the sub's bench.

But if Donaghy looked wrong-footed at times, he did a splendid job in dealing with the speedy John Chiedozie, and underlined his versatility by cracking a perfect pass through Orient's defence for Hill to latch on to and score the Town's second after evading Tommy Taylor's tackle.

Attacking the Oak Road end in the second half, the Town looked set to double their score at least, but instead Orient fought their way back into it.

Striker Joe Mayo had abandoned his centre-half role to move into the attack and after Paul Price

had bounced a header on to the top of the bar the Londoners were unexpectedly only one goal behind.

Mayo knocked on a throw-in into the path of John Margerrison. He always used to save some of his best games for Fulham for Town matches, and he produced a flashing drive into the corner of the net to reduce Orient's deficit.

Two minutes later Orient's fight should have been over because Brian Stein brilliantly tricked Bobby Fisher and lashed a shot into the net from just outside the penalty area.

I was a beautiful "goal", and it was a tragedy for Stein that Hatton was stan-

ding in an offside position in front of Day, and the effort was disallowed.

As a team, the Town were ahead of Orient in all departments, but with Hatton and Stein still below their best the smooth work in approach was wasted as shots failed to give Day much trouble.

"There's no doubt about it," said Town boss David Pleat. "We would like another front runner to make us a bit sharper, and to increase competition for places. But there were some very good things in our game, and it's nice to get your first win of the season and know that you well deserve it."