

Sports News 1

Town Match Verdict ★★★★★

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ALL-STARS SUPREME

Orient smashers earn a trip to Newcastle

Manager of the month

THE cup win at Orient, the Town's fifth successive victory, provided a triple celebration for David Pleat.

Before kick-off he had been named the Bells whisky Second Division manager of the month.

It was Pleat's first FA Cup win as Town boss, at the fourth attempt, and David Moss's penalty was the first FA Cup goal scored by the Town since Mr Pleat became manager, on January 26, 1978.

It was appropriate that he should break his cup duck in London. His first game as manager was a fourth round cup-tie at Millwall which the Town lost 0-4.

The next two seasons saw shock 0-2 defeats against teams from lower divisions in the third round each time, at York in 1979 and at home to Swindon a year ago.

A VISIT to St James's Park to meet Newcastle United was the prize the Town won this week for their best FA Cup performance for years. And although manager David Pleat wanted Liverpool at home, his first thought about the long trip to Newcastle was that it was tough on Town supporters.

If I can be presumptuous, and speak as one of those supporters, I am looking forward to the chance of seeing the Town gain revenge for their defeat at St James's Park early in the season.

The manner of the Town's victory at Orient, where most of us would have been happy with a draw, helped to cheer up Mr Pleat as he contemplated the prospects of the journey to the North East.

The draw means that the Town and Newcastle will meet on successive Saturdays, because they clash at Kenilworth Road on January 17 as a prelude to the cup-tie.

"If we can keep on the way we have been going recently, we need fear no-one," said Mr Pleat. "I shan't worry too much about the problems Newcastle might cause."

His confidence is justified by the evidence of a superb third round victory at Brisbane Road on Saturday. If they can produce the same kind of explosive finishing and all-round consistency, the Town will be more than a handful for Newcastle.

Orient had at least as much possession of the ball going forward, but were rarely allowed a clear sight of Jake Findlay. The Town were more composed,

REPORT BY
BRIAN SWAIN

PICTURES BY
MARK RICHARDS

with every member of the side laying claim to the man-of-the-match tag.

You could give it to David Moss for his general hard work and deadly finishing, with a killing third goal which had Orient manager Jimmy Bloomfield enthusing "just great".

Or to Ricky Hill for his non-stop harrying in midfield and attacking thrusts. Or to Mark Aizlewood for coming out on top of a tough battle with Orient danger man John Chiedoie. Or to Mal Donaghy for his covering and tackling. Or to Findlay for a brilliant save when Orient tried to mount a late recovery.

Name any Town player, and you could find good reason for calling him the star man. As a team the Town were a notch above their Orient counterparts. Each Town player had hit good form at the same time.

The threat of Stanley Bowles in midfield was kept quiet by some tigerish work by Alan West and Tony Grealish, and Mike Saxby came through with calm authority after being recalled in a reshuffled defence, with Donaghy at right back in place of the injured Kirk Stephens.

Paul Price is so quietly effective and dependable on days like this that you tend to take his consistency for granted, and the same was true of Brian Stein.

He was marked tighter than he has been in recent games, presumably because Orient spies had realised the danger his footwork poses. But the threat was always apparent—and the bonus for the Town was that while two men were often on guard against Stein, it made space for Moss, Hill and Godfrey Ingram, and they used it with telling effect.

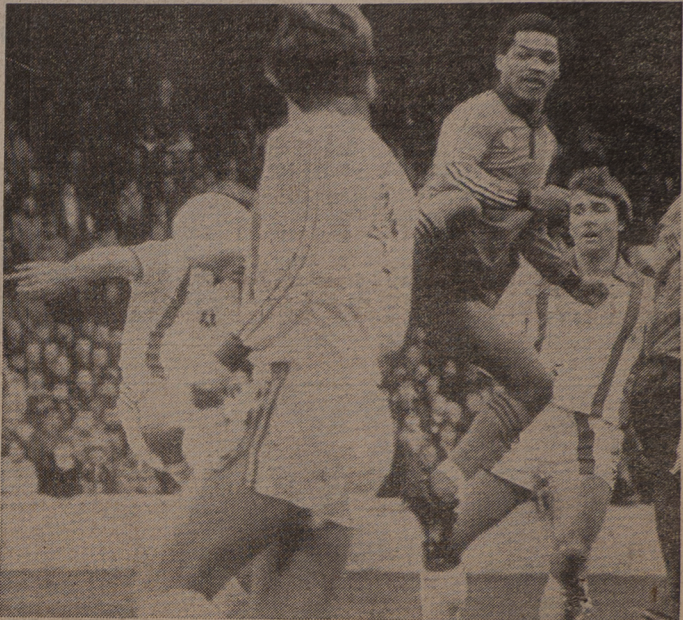
The Town shook Orient with an early burst in which Hill fired a shot just too high and Stein back-heeled a clever flick on to and over the bar.

Chiedoie replied with a run, past Aizlewood and a shot over the bar, and was later upended by a tackle which earned Aizlewood a booking.

Facing a strong wind, the Town played safe for much of the first half, and their containing game, including back passes and possession football in their own half, angered the home supporters. I didn't much like it myself, but



● MATCH-WINNERS: Godfrey Ingram and David Moss



● CHEEKY: Brian Stein, surrounded by defenders, gets in a fifth minute back-heel flick. The ball bounced onto and over the bar.

appreciated the need.

Orient's frustration was all the more understandable in the second half, when they found that their team was not capable of the same control and passing accuracy against the wind.

Every man has the right to an occasional off day, and too many Orient men were made to look decidedly off as the Town grew in confidence and authority.

The only soar on a smooth passage through the cup-tie was in the 32nd minute when former Orient skipper Grealish brought down Nigel Parsons. The two engaged in a bad-tempered brawl, with fists flying.

Referee Les Shapter, a Devon policeman, would surely have nicked any two men seen doing the same thing on the street. Unaccountably, when both ought to have been sent off by the laws of football, he settled for a telling off.

He made one or two strange decisions, and Orient boss Bloomfield

agreed with the Town that a penalty should have been given a minute before half-time when Tommy Taylor tripped Ingram.

Chiedoie slammed a shot against the post seconds after that, but the Town booked their fourth round ticket with a three-goal burst in the first 15 minutes of the second half.

They put together a lot of good moves, and in the 51st minute Hill was sent through by Ingram's pass. Nigel Gray downed him, and although it didn't look as much a penalty as the previous incident, the award was made and Moss scored from the spot.

Two minutes later Ingram took a pass from West and from the inside-left corner of the penalty area curled a swerving low shot around a surprised Mervyn Day into the far corner.

In the 60th minute Moss produced the sort of virtuoso goal that seems to come naturally to him. A superb diagonal ball by Price put him in possession three or four yards outside the penalty area.

Day moved perhaps three yards off his line to narrow the angle, and had other defenders in attendance, but Moss chipped an exquisite goal over the top of them and into the net an inch or two under the bar.

Orient could not compete with that sort of skill, but threw a lot of effort into a last-ditch surge. Parsons kicked Findlay on the shoulder, and was not penalised, but the goal-keeper responded with a thrilling flying save to push Roffey's volley round the post, and also saved well from Ian Moores and Peter Taylor.

The consolation goal for Orient came too late to upset the Town's rhythm—Billy Jennings netted in the 88th minute after a shrewd pass from Bowles.

Mr Bloomfield accepted the result with good grace. "We have no complaints—on the day the best side won. We may have had more chances but Luton took theirs and we didn't. Luton deserved to win and their third goal was just great."



● KILLER: Godfrey Ingram, perfectly balanced and poised, strikes the Town's second goal, two minutes after David Moss had put them ahead

Match Details

ORIENT 1, LUTON TOWN 3
Half-time 0-0

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

ORIENT: Day; Hughton, Tom Taylor, Gray, Roffey; Parsons, Bowles, Peter Taylor; Chiedoie, Moores, Jennings. Sub: Coates, not used.

THE GOALS: David Moss, penalty, 51 minutes, after Ricky Hill was tripped; Godfrey Ingram, 20-yard bender, 53 minutes; Moss again, 60 minutes, brilliant chip from just outside the box.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town four saved, four wide, one hit the bar; Orient five saved, seven wide, one hit the post.

ENTERTAINMENT: Great stuff in the second half when the Town really turned it on.

ATTENDANCE: 9,891, well above Orient's average, thanks to a big following from Luton.

REFEREE: Les Shapter, Torquay. Had an off day, for which Tony Grealish should be truly thankful, but not Ricky Hill.

BOOKINGS: Mark Aizlewood for foul on Chiedoie Hill for alleged time-wasting at throw-in.



● CLINCHER: David Moss, outside the penalty area, measures his chip shot for the Town's third goal, between two defenders and over the goalkeeper into the net.