

EASY DOES IT IN THE LEAGUE...

ENJOYING THE perfect warm-up for Tuesday's League Cup-tie, the Town barely flexed their muscles as they strolled back to the top of the Second Division by crushing Orient at Brisbane Road.

If he had been given a choice, manager David Pleat could hardly have picked a better contest to build up confidence for a cup run — if there is a more pathetic team in the Second Division than Orient I've yet to see it. This was their seventh game without a win, and their sixth in a row without scoring.

They were made to look even worse than Bottom of the Second Division. Their best players, John Chiedozie and Joe Mayo, were sold off to precipitate the departure of Jimmy Bloomfield as manager, and the luckless Paul Went has been left with a bunch of men with no confidence and not a lot of ability.

The honourable exception was Henry Hughton, who knew he would have to work hard to cut down the danger from David Moss. He succeeded to some extent, but with the Town's midfield all-powerful, Moss was able to make a telling contribution anyway.

Lil Fuccillo again stamped his authority, and it was a pleasure to see Ricky Hill also getting further forward as the Town ran the game for almost every one of the 90 minutes.

Brian Horton has settled in perfectly, and with the defence rarely under pressure it was a

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN PICTURES: MARK RICHARDS

day when goals might have come from any of ten players.

The only criticism of the all-round performance was that the Town might have had five or six goals instead of just three, and there were a couple of times when mistakes at the back by Mal Donaghy and Mark Aizlewood would have been punished by a better side than Orient.

In fairness to the rear-guard, though, it must have been difficult to maintain position and concentration when the Town's superiority in all departments was so obvious.

Their passing and running into position was lovely to watch and they might have gone ahead in the eighth minute when Aizlewood and Brian Stein carved out an opening for Horton. His shot from just outside the box hit

the inside of the post and was cleared.

Orient's best attempt came shortly afterwards, when there was a touch of hesitancy after a corner by Bill Roffey. Peter Taylor looked a scorer until Jake Findlay made his one and only serious save of the day.

The Town were in charge from then on, with Stein and Steve White pulling defenders all over the place with quick runs as the Town's midfield controlled the flow of the game.

Aizlewood and Kirk Stephens were able to enjoy a run-out as auxiliary attackers and by the end of the afternoon only Donaghy and Mike Saxby hadn't forced Mervyn Day into action.

Orient were chasing shadows as the Town put together a string of flowing moves, and two goals in

five minutes ensured that the 100 per cent away record was maintained.

DEFLECTED

The build-up in each case was delightful, even if there was a touch of luck about the opener, in the 20th minute. Hill, White, Stein and Moss were involved as the ball was worked from right midfield to left-wing, and Aizlewood blasted in a 25-yard low shot which went into the net with a deflection off Nigel Gray.

Five minutes later another incisive move went down the Town's right. Stein took his marker out to the wing, back-heeled cheekily, and Stephens rammed a low cross into the goal-mouth for Hill to score, after timing his forward run perfectly.

CRUISED

Hughton cleared an overhead shot by Stein off the line to keep the half-time score down to two, and Tommy Taylor did it again early in the second half.

As Orient looked more and more dispirited, the Town cruised through the second half, and scored their third in the 74th minute when Horton and Stephens raided down the right-wing. Stein's shot was blocked, but the ball ran free and White hammered a first-time shot into the net from the edge of the penalty area.

PRESSURE

The result left the rival managers with two different problems — Mr Pleat was not sure that he wanted to be on top of the table this early in the season, facing the prospect of a string of opponents who will all view Luton Town as the team they must beat.

Mr Went, always an honest and dependable centre-half, called his team's display "disastrous" and added that he thought it would take a long time to get things right. I suspect he's going to find out a lot more about real pressure this season than Mr Pleat.

ORIENT DETAILS

ORIENT 0, LUTON TOWN 3 81/82
Half-time: 0—2

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Saxby, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill (Antic, 77 mins), Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss.

ORIENT: Day; Hughton, Gray, Cunningham, Roffey; T. Taylor, Margerrison, P. Taylor; Godfrey, Moores (Silkman, 33 mins), Jennings.

THE GOALS: Mark Aizlewood, 20 minutes, 25-yard low drive after lovely build-up, shot deflected in by Orient's Nigel Gray; Ricky Hill, 25 minutes, brilliantly engineered and finished; Steve White, 74 minutes, shot from edge of the box after another sweeping move.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town six saved, nine off target and one hit the post; Orient three saved and four wide. Corners: 7-5 to Orient.

ENTERTAINMENT: A delight for Town supporters, with Orient powerless to compete with a series of quick and clever movements based on accurate passing.

ATTENDANCE: 5,084, with at least half of them from Luton.

REFEREE: Alf Grey, Norfolk. Enjoyed an easy run as much as the Town did.

HIGHSPOT: The Town are back on top of the Second Division, two points clear of the field.



Steve White, right, knocks in the rebound at Orient after Brian Stein's shot had been blocked.