

Travelling Town fans give new manager a rapturous welcome in east London

Ex-Hatter dampens Harford comeback

LUTON TOWN FC

LEAGUE ONE

LEYTON ORIENT

2

Boyd '39', Barcham '55'

LUTON

1

Keane '67'

TOM LEECH

The Matchroom Stadium

tom.leech@lsnmedia.co.uk



THE Mick Harford era didn't get off to a dream start as a blast from the past returned to haunt the Hatters.

Adam Boyd endured a nightmare 12 months at Kenilworth Road before being released this summer and the former £500,000 flop gave his new side a first-half lead.

Strike partner Andy Barcham doubled Orient's advantage against the run of play before Keith Keane went some way to redressing the balance with his first of the season.

New boss Harford saw his side dominate possession throughout but struggle to find the elusive equaliser and the Luton legend knows the fight for League One survival will be tough.

"There's a definite imbalance in the squad – with a lack of central defenders – but I knew that when I came here. We'll learn from today," he said.

"There's no blame culture, they were a better team. We are thin on numbers but as a group we'll stick together until the end of the season.

"I told the players in the dressing room I believe we can compete at this level and we can get out of trouble. I hate saying this when we lose but it was a good performance.

"I've seen Orient a few times this season and they're a well-drilled team who are challenging for promotion. But we were chasing the game and a bit open in defence.

"The fans were fantastic and I can take a lot of heart from today. We go to Bournemouth on Tuesday in good spirits."

With Harford's first game being away from home there was no official parading, but the Luton fans that made it down to East London ensured he got a rapturous reception.

While the new manager got the cheers, the jeers were saved for Orient's number 18, Boyd. The striker scored just twice for Luton after signing from Hartlepool for half a million last season. In the summer Kevin Blackwell decided to cut his losses and let Boyd leave for free. Orient snapped him up and following the move he's lost a few pounds and gained a few goals.

The stage was set for Boyd to come back and haunt his former employers but Hatters under Harford looked like a new proposition. Calm on the ball and passing well, it was pleasing to the eye but neither side



BRAND NEW START: Calvin Andrew in a tussle with the 'O's' Charlie Daniels. Inset Ex-hatter Adam Boyd

went close early on.

Matt Spring had the game's first meaningful effort on goal, forcing an instinctive block from Orient keeper Stuart Nelson with a half volley 25 minutes in.

Just after the half hour mark Dean Brill showed some uncharacteristic jitters when he hesitated to come for a long ball and Orient's Barcham beat him with a header. The on-loan Spurs striker couldn't believe his luck and a second later neither could the Hatters as the ball rolled inches wide of an empty net.

That chance aside it had been all Luton so when Orient went ahead on 39 minutes it was hard to swallow. Made even harder by the goalscorer. Charlie Daniels' run down the left wasn't tracked and when he over-ran the ball Brill appeared to have it covered. The goalkeeper's haste to gather carried him beyond the penalty box and he dropped the ball at Daniels' feet. The left back ran towards the unguarded net before unselfishly passing to Boyd who hammered his shot in with relish.

Hatters came out for the restart eager to make their possession pay but after penning Orient in for ten minutes, the home side went two up with their first foray into Luton's half.

Naturally, Boyd had a hand in the goal, slicing the Luton defence in two with a ball through to Barcham. From there the young striker did the rest, tormenting Chris Perry with his pace before squeezing the ball between Brill and the Luton captain.

Harford introduced Paul Furlong and Dean Morgan five minutes later and the pair almost had an instant impact. Morgan broke down the left and delivered a low cross that Furlong wrapped his foot around. The curling shot was on target but lacked pace and Nelson comfortably saved.

Nelson didn't have it as easy from Darren Currie's whipped in corner on 67 minutes when his fumble allowed Luton back in. The Leyton keeper tried to rise above the bodies in his area to punch clear but flapped it straight into the path of

Keane who kung fu kicked the ball home in mid air from near the penalty spot.

The impressive Keane was hero of the hour at the other end when he threw his body on the line to keep Orient at bay moments later. Sub Efe Echanomi bundled his way through and went one-on-one with Brill. He rounded the keeper but the covering Don Hutchison slid in to get a touch that looked to have sent the ball trickling wide. The coast wasn't clear however as Boyd lurked at the near post eager and about to tap in until Keane dived in to block and smashed into the post.

The right back walked away from the collision unscathed and saw Luton denied an equaliser on 76 minutes when Spring's long range effort was palmed away by a fully stretched Nelson.

Ten minutes later the Orient shot stopper foiled the Hatters again. This time Drew Talbot beat the off-side trap and sent the ball curling into the top corner of the net. Again the strong arm of Nelson preserved his side's advantage.

stats corner

MAN OF THE MATCH



Matt Spring

Oozed confidence in the middle of the pitch

THE SQUAD

Brill; Keane, Perry, Hutchison, Goodall (Emanuel '85); Bell, Spring, Robinson (Furlong '60), Currie; Talbot, Andrew (Morgan '60). Subs: Beresford, Jackson.

MATCH FACTS

CORNERS

LEYTON ORIENT 2 LUTON 7

OFFSIDE

LEYTON ORIENT 1 LUTON 2

SHOTS ON TARGET

LEYTON ORIENT 4 LUTON 8

SHOTS OFF TARGET

LEYTON ORIENT 2 LUTON 6

BOOKINGS

LEYTON ORIENT 0
LUTON 2
Robinson 28, Perry 50

REFEREE

Paul Armstrong (Berkshire)

FOOTBALL LEAGUE ONE

Friday, 18 January 2008

Hartlepool 0 Cheltenham 2

Saturday, 19 January 2008

Bournemouth 1 Southend 4

Brighton 1 Huddersfield 1

Bristol Rovers 1 Walsall 1

Carlisle 1 Crewe 0

Gillingham 0 Northampton 1

Leeds 0 Doncaster 1

Leyton Orient 2 Luton 1

Millwall 0 Tranmere 1

Swansea 2 Port Vale 0

Swindon 2 Nottm Forest 1

Yeovil 0 Oldham 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swansea	23	14	5	4	44	21	47
Nott'm Forest	24	12	8	4	39	16	44
Carlisle	24	12	6	6	38	25	42
D'caster	25	11	8	6	38	24	41
Walsall	26	10	11	5	32	22	41
Leeds	25	17	4	4	21	26	40
Leyton O	26	11	7	8	33	36	40
Yeovil	26	10	6	10	25	28	36
Brighton	24	9	7	8	31	28	34
Tranmere	26	9	7	10	28	28	34
Southend	25	10	4	11	34	35	34
Swindon	24	8	8	8	33	31	32
Oldham	24	8	8	8	26	24	32
Hartlepool	25	8	6	11	35	35	30
Gillingham	24	8	6	10	28	38	30
Huddersf'd	25	9	3	13	25	41	30
Bristol Rvrs	23	7	8	8	25	26	29
North'ton	26	7	8	11	31	39	29
Crewe	24	7	7	10	25	38	28
Millwall	24	7	5	12	26	36	26
Cheltenham	24	6	6	12	19	35	24
Luton	24	9	6	9	26	27	23
Port Vale	26	5	5	16	23	39	20
B'mouth	25	5	5	15	27	45	20