

ORIENT'S HAPPY EASTER

Five points to safety

Orient 2, Oxford United 1

By Vince Wright.

FIVE points out of six was Orient's handsome gain over the Easter holiday.

With seven of their last eleven games to be played at home, the O's can face the remainder of their league programme with justifiable confidence.

Against Watford they were almost flawless in victory. On Monday they were a mixture of brilliance and mediocrity and, although they fought back from being a goal down to win, their performance was far from convincing.

They began well enough and Cliff Holton fired just wide. Then Whitehouse and Slater carved out a chance for Price and the winger was unlucky to see the ball deflected past the post.

Oxford were taking a long time to settle down but they stunned everyone by grabbing a 25th-minute lead. Graham Atkinson chipped over a statuesque Orient defence and Harrington easily beat Willis from six yards.

For the next 15 minutes Orient were very disjointed. Passes were misdirected, their forwards made little headway and their defence usually so reliable, panicked at the hint of danger.

The industrious Whitehouse cut the ball back from the byeline for Holton to net but referee Daws ruled that it was out of play before Whitehouse crossed, a view which I did not share.

An air of desperation was now creeping into Orient's play

but they equalised seconds before half-time. Carter tried a shot from the edge of the area and the ball was diverted past Sherratt by Whitehouse.

This gave Orient added incentive and a minute after the interval they scored the winner. Price was obstructed while trying to break through the middle. He took the free-kick himself, tapping the ball to Holton who blasted an unstoppable shot past the unsuspecting goalkeeper. This was a touch of vintage Holton and the big fellow thoroughly deserved his success.

More chances fell Orient's way but their finishing did not match their approach work. Price shot wide after a hard low cross from Slater evaded the Oxford defence and then Sherratt made a prodigious double save from Whitehouse.

Orient again lapsed into one of their slack periods, allowing Oxford to regain the initiative, but Went, Jones and Howe refused to capitulate and Orient just held on for two hard-earned points.

Orient: Willis, Jones, Howe, Wood, Went, Allen, Slater, Carter, Whitehouse, Holton, Price. Sub: Bradbury.

Oxford United: Sherratt, Beavon, Quartermain, R. Atkinson, Kyle, Clarke, Evanson, G. Atkinson, Buck, Jones, Harrington. Sub: Smithson.



★ (434)
ABOVE: Inside-right Billy Carter shows his jubilation at Orient's second goal—the winner, scored by inside-left Cliff Holton. **BELOW:** A let-off for Oxford as the ball, shot in by Brian Whitehouse, rolls just outside a post to the chagrin of Holton (right).

Pictures by Archie McNeice ★ (435)



STALEMATE

Oxford United 0, Orient 0

MOST goalless draws are dull, uninteresting games, and this one was no exception (writes Vince Wright). Orient must have been satisfied with another valuable point on Good Friday but they could so easily have won.

Cliff Holton, recalled to the side, provided their best effort with a tremendous 35-yard drive, brilliantly tipped over by Sherratt. O's were unlucky to find Sherratt in such masterly form and he later made great saves from Whitehouse and Jones.

Oxford, fielding four reserves and needing the points as much as Orient, tried to force the pace but found Orient's defence in an uncompromising mood, Ron Willis being in superb form.

Right-back Eddie Werge efficiently blotted out left-winger Harrington and used the ball to good advantage. Price and Slater worked hard to create chances for Orient's inside-forward trio but Holton and Whitehouse had

a tough task against Oxford centre-half Maurice Kyle.

Shortly after the interval Buck brought Willis to his knees with a powerful shot. Then Orient wing-half Peter Allen made a sudden break, and thrust his way past two defenders but, with only the keeper to beat, he topped his shot.

Little Terry Price had the best chance to win the match for O's but he was tackled just as he was about to shoot into a vacant net and the ball rolled harmlessly wide.

Oxford United: Sherratt, Beavon, Quartermain, R. Atkinson, Kyle, Clarke, George, Buck, G. Atkinson, Jones, Harrington. Sub: Smithson.

Orient: Willis, Werge, Howe, Wood, Went, Allen, Slater, Jones, Holton, Whitehouse, Price. Sub: Ackerman.

Snedden sinks Watford

Watford 1, Orient 3

THIS was unquestionably Orient's greatest victory of the season and, make no mistake about it, they fully deserved to beat Watford on Saturday. The O's were superior in every department and the football they played, especially in the second half, was a delight to watch (writes Vince Wright).

It was hard to believe that Watford were a side chasing promotion and Orient were in the lower reaches of the Third Division.

Cliff Holton played his best game of the season against his old club and his presence alone worried Watford into making unnecessary mistakes. Another hero was John Snedden, recalled for this particular match. Although wearing a No. 5 shirt, he operated at inside-right and his two goals midway through the second half made sure of the points. They were his first goals of his career.

Orient had the tonic of a fourth-minute lead. Cowen could only palm Price's corner kick out to Went whose header sailed into the roof of the net. Just before half-time Watford equalised with a freak goal. Went's attempted clearance

struck Garbett's leg and the ball rebounded in with Willis a dumbfounded spectator.

In the second half Terry Bradbury substituted for Werge and signalled his arrival with a cracking drive which was only inches wide.

Orient regained the lead in the 64th minute when Slater neatly pulled the ball back for Snedden to hit it sweetly home from 15 yards. Seven minutes later Snedden scored Orient's third and his second goal when he took advantage of a defensive blunder to cleverly steer the ball wide of Cowen.

So, once again, the O's confounded the critics by soundly beating one of the Third Division's better teams.

Watford: Cowen, Furphy, Williams, Welbourne, Garvey, Eddy, Scullion, Garbett, Lawton, Walley, Owen. Sub: Furrice.

Orient: Willis, Jones, Howe, Wood, Snedden, Went, Slater, Allen, Holton, Werge, Price. Sub: Bradbury.