

# TOUGHEST SEASON YET—GRAHAM

WITH a week to go to the big kick-off Orient manager Dick Graham shifts in the Brisbane-road soccer hot seat and says: "This is going to be Orient's most crucial season yet—and it's the toughest job I have ever faced."

The job is to haul O's off the downward track and steer them back into the second division. And to do it Graham must break the vicious circle that exists at the Leyton club. For without packed terraces the club can't afford to buy a successful side. And without a winning first team, they can't pack the terraces.

When he began his tough tenure of office two months ago Graham told me: "My immediate job here is to try to sign a couple of experi-



JOHN SMITH, O's skipper, who joined the Leyton club midway through last season, is one of the main eggs for the new Orient team Graham is building.

## ORIENT PREVIEW BY BARRIE KEEFFE

enced campaigners who can pass their knowledge on to the youngsters here."

Already he has done this, signing Cliff Holton, Brian Whitehouse, John Snedden and Terry Bradbury at the expense of Harry Gregory, Colin Flatt and an £8,000 cheque.

First to join the Orient payroll was Southend's Terry Bradbury, the former Chelsea starlet and skipper of the seaside club. He cost Colin Flatt.

Then came Man of All Positions Brian Whitehouse, a vital asset to a small staffed club like Orient. For him—a man that has played in every position in league soccer—O's signed the cheque.

### PROFIT MARGIN

And last week in a swift swap with South London rivals Charlton came prolific scoring star Cliff Holton and team mate John Snedden. Hard running Harry Gregory, already listed, was O's bartered property.

Graham's profit margin in these three deals seems high.

Mix them with Orient's already proven Dick le Fien, John Smith and Dave Metchick and talented youngsters like Peter Allen, Billy Garter and Paul Went and the Leyton squad's pre-season picture looks a lot healthier than it has in recent years.

But ask Graham of his hopes for the coming campaign and he puts up a wary "It's a long season ahead guard."

### CLIMB BACK

Then with a sudden spate of words: "This is going to be a tremendously hard season—the toughest season I have ever faced. Everyone is going to have to give everything he has. It's probably the hardest and most crucial term the club has faced in its history. It's hard to fall from the top division to the third so swiftly. And it's going to be hard to climb back."

But he adds: "I earn my bread and butter by being a football manager. And I get a great deal of satisfaction out of doing my job well. I want to give Leyton Orient a winning team, and I'll do my damndest to make sure I do."

So Graham stands in the Brisbane-road wings waiting for August 29 with Orient's immediate future in his grasp. "I'm convinced it hasn't been in better or safer hands."



Ron Willis, the Orient keeper, cannot get his hands to Ken Found's header but his challenge is enough to ensure that the ball goes wide. Anxiously looking on is Cliff Holton.



HARRY GREGORY—Charlton Athletic.