

ALL FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, WEST HAM

By **PETER LORENZO**: Luton Town 4, West Ham 1

WHAT happened? ... Where did we go wrong? ... You could see the shocked bewilderment and unmasked disappointment written on their faces as 11 glum, heavy-hearted West Ham players shuffled slowly out into the Luton evening sun after this shattering first defeat.

Clutching at alibis, they would have liked to have thought that it all sprang from the hotly-disputed decision of Westbury referee Norman Taylor in waving Gordon Turner to play on and score the crucial second goal after Ken Brown had handled.

But this wasn't the real reason. The talented, hard-hitting Hammers sacrificed their shining unbeaten record because on too many occasions they overstepped the dangerous border line separating class and confidence from almost cocky casualness.

It has taught them a lesson, an invaluable lesson. So much so that I now fancy their chances against Manchester United at Upton Park tonight, more than if they had continued their triumphant run at Luton.

NO SLACKERS

Defeat must not affect West Ham's high-brimming confidence. They are a good side, they will be better. Don't just take my word for it ... listen to three of conquering Luton's most experienced players.

Said flying leader Allen Brown: "What a side this West Ham ... easily the best we've met this season."

Said skipper and former England centre-half Syd Owen: "There are no slackers in that team. Every man is in there fighting. Success must come with that sort of spirit."

Said crackshot Gordon Turner: "They'll finish a lot nearer the top than the bottom."

And there are happy days ahead, too, for Luton. This was easily their best performance of the season, following four days after their worst display—against Leeds. (Must be a moral for West Ham here.)

Luton needed a quick visit from a footballing team like West Ham to restore their zip and bounce. And they really ticked along in that four-goal second half.

"It's the first time our attack has clicked this season," said Luton boss Dally Duncan. But he still couldn't raise a smile ... "my sciatica's too painful."