

Lesson From Luton

By CLEMENT FREUD

Luton 4 West Ham 1

A sunny afternoon, a feast of good football and five goals; what more could the 8,000 West Ham supporters who made the trip have asked for—except victory?

The Londoners, after a few minutes of misunderstandings, settled down to their own blend of confident first-time football and after 12 minutes Keeble slammed in a tremendous volley from 20 yards. Instead of following this up they played out the first half decently enough but without any real determination to go farther ahead, as if they felt that in Bedfordshire a one-goal lead would be enough.

A minute before half-time came the shot of the match, a tremendous drive from Musgrove bound for the net but unfortunately intercepted by Mr. Taylor, of Westbury, who sank to the ground deflated, his whistle limp between his lips, the ball resting in the small of his back. He was carried off.

Smart Turn

It must not be felt that a referee hit in the back is like a soldier shot in the posterior; on the contrary, Mr. Taylor turned in time, otherwise he would never have been able to face the hero's welcome that greeted him on his return to health and command.

After a few spasmodic West Ham attacks Luton settled down, gained command and soon had a goal, Gregory misjudging a beautifully placed Brown header from a Morton free kick: soon after we were treated

to one of the most controversial goals in football.

A Luton back lobbed the ball up-field, where, standing in a straight line towards goal, was West Ham's Brown and Luton's Turner palpably offside and being vigorously flagged by the linesman. Brown playing flag instead of whistle attempted to catch the ball in his hands but merely deflected it on to Turner's foot, a quick shot and it was in the net; what was more, it was a goal.

Food for Talk

The buzz took a good five minutes to die down. The advantage rule? Two fouls that cancelled each other out? They will go on discussing this for months.

The lesson must be that if you are going to handle, anticipating an off-side decision or even to relieve your defence: catch the ball, fall on it, or tuck it up your shirt, don't tap it to the opposing inside-right.

Whatever one felt about this goal, Luton were on top. West Ham played like a beaten team and to avoid the goal being made a vital issue, Turner scored a third and Pacey hit the fourth deflected by a defender past the luckless Gregory.

It would be churlish not to mention the brilliant Baynham in Luton's goal, and as ever Malcolm was the Londoners' star player.