

RARE HOME POINTS CAME TOO LATE

Defensive Mistakes An Aid To The Town By CHILTERN

LUTON TOWN 3, WEST HAM 1

UNFORTUNATELY, these two rare home points came too late to give the Town any chance of avoiding relegation after five years in the First Division because Birmingham's success at Sheffield removed the last vestige of what was always a very slight hope.

Victory was literally almost handed to the Town on a plate through the shortcomings and elementary mistakes of the West Ham defence during the first half when the Town scored three times.

LANSDOWNE, late deputy for the injured Brown, started off on the wrong foot in the third minute when he made a pass back to Rhodes who had already advanced and the ball sailed in under the bar.

That seemed to set the tempo

for the whole of the Hammers' defensive display before half-time because they made mistake after mistake.

McBRIDE took advantage of one by Moore in the 24th minute to put the Town two up in comfortable style and, eight minutes later, more slack defensive play enabled CUMMINS to obtain a third.

Had the Town really been accurate in their finishing, their tally would have been more than three at the interval, but they let some simple chances slip by, though this may seem carping in view of the fact that they scored three which is an unusual circumstance this season.

There was rather a different story in the second half after West Ham obviously had had an interval pep talk which produced a general tightening up in defence and more determination in other departments.

HAD LUCK FOR A CHANGE

In fact, during this period, things ran rather better for the Town, from the luck point of view than in previous matches this season, otherwise, they could have found themselves struggling to win a match on which they had had such a grip.

When DUNMORE reduced the arrears after 69 minutes with a speculative shot which an apparently unsighted Baynham watched go in off the inside of the post, West Ham were in with a chance.

This would have been increased had the referee held to a decision to award a penalty against Daniel when he pulled down Grice, but the Town players drew his attention to the fact that a linesman had signalled that the ball was out of play earlier and he reversed his decision.

So, in the end, the Town went on to an easy enough win and, in some phases, their display was more satisfying than in most previous matches.

DEFENSIVE RUGGEDNESS

The ruggedness of Kelly and Daniel was an asset to the defence and Dunne showed a continuance of the form that has regained for him a place in the Eire team.

Although Cartwright was the most likely looking of the West Ham forwards, this did not detract from the play of Pacey, looking happier in his old position, and Morton came through well, too. Baynham looked altogether more competent than his West Ham counter-part.

With Tracey and Cummins on the wings, the forward line wore a somewhat unfamiliar look and each did some useful things without being really consistent.

Again, Turner found goals elusive and the best shooting came from McBride, who could have used more support, but Groves was again over-deliberate as he is so often at inside-forward.

LUTON TOWN. — Baynham; Dunne, Daniel; Morton, Kelly, Pacey; Tracey, Turner, McBride, Groves, Cummins.

WEST HAM. — Rhodes; Bond, Cantwell; Malcolm, Lansdowne, Moore; Grice, Cartwright, Dunmore, Smillie, Musgrove.

Referee.—R. Reddaway, Kettering. Attendance.—11,404.

WHAT THE OTHER CRITICS SAID

"In the second half, West Ham were much more settled but hardly more successful. And, with Luton's full-backs both playing well, a Dunmore long-shot goal and a Grice drive against a post were the only reward."—"Sunday Dispatch."



"For Luton this was a galling game, knowing they must go down. They were the far better side, keener and more incisive. Dunne and Daniel, the full-backs, unlike their West Ham opposites, cleared promptly. Every forward worked unsparingly, chasing and tackling hard. Perhaps for the first time this season the ball ran for Luton—and about time, too."—"The People."



"Safe and sound in the League, the Hammers were content to turn out scrappy play, and against a hard-fighting, never-say-die Town side, looked more like Second Division candidates than Luton did. Luton did not treat this last First Division home match as a mere formality. They attacked from the word go. Although right-winger Tracey hadn't the speed and skill of the injured Bingham, he presented Joe McBride and Gordon Turner with a number of chances."—"Empire News."



"In the final First Division match at Luton, West Ham's defence showed the generosity for which they have become renowned this season. Too bad for Luton that luck was so late in coming to help them. Nevertheless, this was quite a good win. There were some fine performances by their men — notably full-backs Dunne and Daniel, a shrewd pair; constructive left-half Pacey, and, in the attack, try-hard McBride and crafty outside-left Cummins."—"Sunday Express."



"Luton played the first half of this game as if they were going out of the First Division in a blaze of glory. Three goals up in half an hour, they had a pitifully weak Hammers' defence in a state of panic, but in the second half they took on their old care-worn look again."—"News of the World."