

QUICK ONE-TWO SINKS LUTON

West Ham 2, Luton Town 0

74/75

WEST HAM whose prospects for the new season looked as promising as a Court Line Holiday after they had plunged to a four goal defeat at Manchester on Saturday, performed their own rescue operation for the flagging hopes by blasting a two goal win over Luton at Upton Park on Monday night.

Promoted Luton who had chalked up a 2-1 win over the Hammers on the same pitch just twelve nights earlier in a Texaco cup tie were forced to concede the honours when it came to the real business of first division football.

They were blasted by two goals in the first twenty minutes and the rest of the game became mere football formality.

Although the faithful followers went home happy after seeing their side chalk up a clear cut victory in their first Upton Park League appearance there was no real evidence that the fans will be cheering their side to glory this season.

The doubts remain over the strike force of the West Ham attack as the forwards who failed to score in the Texaco cup games are still waiting to hit the target after two League appearances.

Back line player Frank Lampard and midfield man Billy Bonds showed them the way with two early goals that licked Luton. Skipper Bonds who stopped the Upton Park goal charts last season is setting a hot pace this season with Monday's effort following his three-goal record in the Texaco competition.

However the front runners were again a big disappointment and it leaves little room for guesswork to decide what positions boss Ron Greenwood was seeking to strengthen as he missed the Hammers two opening League games to watch other sides in action.

On Monday Johnny Ayrís was given the role of teaming up alongside big Clyde Best in place of Bobby Gould but did not pose a regular threat to the Luton rearguard.

Trevor Brooking bursting through from midfield provided more problems for the Luton rearguard but failed to finish when his intelligent running left him first class scoring chances.

In fact after their unsteady start Luton settled to give as good as they received for the rest of the game and tested the West Ham defence with a stream of high balls into the missile aiming for the head of lofty striker Barry Butlin.

However Butlin's high flying

skills did not produce a real goal threat it was the shooting power of Gordon Hindson that spelt the biggest danger to West Ham's lead.

He crashed the ball against the woodwork in the first half and then produced two fine full length saves from Mervyn Day after the break.

The second half pressure which the Hammers defence absorbed showed they had not suffered any after effects from that four goal thrashing at Maine Road Manchester.

It had been defender LAMPARD who had struck the first blow for the Hammers just four minutes after the start, when a high ball from McDowell was not cleared by the defence he cracked in a powerful volley from the edge of the penalty area.

After nineteen minutes came the second when Billy BONDS aggression forced a corner and the West Ham skipper was the man who got his head to Paddon's kick to power home the second.

The two early setbacks proved too much for Luton who had battled bravely before losing against Liverpool just two days earlier. However they showed enough form in the second half on Monday night to suggest they will make it quite hot for the Hammers when the third meeting inside three weeks is staged at Kenilworth Road next Wednesday.

Manager Ron Greenwood who watched the Southampton v Hull game on Saturday rather than seeing his side at Maine Road, Manchester was again missing at Upton Park on Monday night.

He went to the Den where Millwall had transfer listed Alf Wood and Doug Alder on show. However it was another forward Gordon Hill, who stole the show as he scored two goals in Millwall's 3-0 success against Nottingham Forest.



Luton defenders look on anxiously as 'keeper Graham Horn fails to stop Billy Bonds header going into the net for West Ham's second goal on Monday night.

West Ham: Day 8, McDowell 7, LAMPARD 8, Bonds 7, Taylor 6, Lock 7, Holland 8, Paddon 6, Ayrís 6, Brooking 7, Best 6. Sub Gould.

Luton Town: Horn, Ryan, Thomson, Anderson, Litt, Garner, Hindson, Husband, Butlin, West, Aston, Shanks.