

# HATTERS JUBILANT AS WEST INSPIRES RECOVERY

WEST HAM manager John Lyall summed up the result perfectly. "We made the mistake of sitting back on a one-goal lead when it wasn't enough to see us through the game," he said.

Lyall was speaking after watching his West Ham FA Cup winners crumble in the second half to give Luton a 2-1 victory — and the best possible start to the season.

But there weren't many Town fans in the ground at half time who would have put money on Luton winning. West Ham mounted

By ERIC HARRIS

continuous pressure but, through a combination of poor finishing and superb goalkeeping by Jake Findlay, went in level at the break.

Luton's biggest asset, however, was their determined ability to overcome and ride that 45 minute crisis.

With the secondhalf introduction of substitute Alan West they looked a much better team.

Lyall paid tribute to the part Findlay paid in preventing the Hammers taking the lead in the first period. "He

made two world-class saves," he added. "I thought we should have been three up at half time but we didn't take advantage of our undoubted superiority.

"Even when we received a break from a penalty, we didn't take the initiative and paid the price to allow Luton to hit back."

Luton boss David Pleat was brave enough to admit that his team were second best in the first half. "It may have looked as though we came for a point but that wasn't the way it was.

## Delighted

"We planned to play open attractive football but West Ham came at us and pushed us back. In the first half, there was nothing we could do about it."

There was no doubt we did well to weather the early storm and I am delighted with the way my players tackled that aspect.

"I was equally delighted with the part West played when he went on and it proved my point that the twelfth man is equally as important as the rest of the team."

Those two first half saves from Findlay were breathtaking as the Hammers continued to surge forward in the unbearable hazy heat. Drenched in perspiration, the Town's defence — with Paul Price playing an outstanding role — organised themselves magnificently.

When they did falter, Findlay was there to complete the mopping up operations.

But Pleat still had one important ace up his sleeve and was later to use it to trump West Ham, who took the lead after 56 minutes when Grealish needlessly lost possession to Holland on the halfway line.

Holland galloped away with Grealish in pursuit. It ended in a penalty decision when Holland was bundled off the ball and Ray Stewart gratefully took advantage of the situation to send Findlay the wrong way.

Ten minutes later, Pleat sent on West to replace Steve White who had failed to indicate that he will figure strongly in the Town's leading scorers' list this season. The manager gave West a midfield position and pushed Antic forward to join Brian Stein and David Moss up front.

That play changed the game completely. Assisted by some, superb passing from West, the Town began to get on top and, after 75

minutes, were on terms when Moss was upended by Alvin Martin inside the box. Deadball expert Moss made no mistake by pushing the ball strongly to Parkes' right.

With the prospect of a point in the bag, the Town closed down at the back much to the annoyance of the Hammers fans who strongly objected to the delaying tactics.

But there was no doubt the exercise paid handsome dividends. West Ham hardly expected the quick break which produced a dramatic winning goal two minutes from the end.

Stein, as lively as ever, tantalised Billy Bonds just inside the area. It resulted in the West Ham defender pulling him down and referee D. Reeves bravely awarded — although quite correctly — a second penalty to the visitors.

Moss showed no signs of nerves as he calmly drove the ball past Parkes in the opposite direction to his first spot kick.

## MATCH DETAILS

**WEST HAM:** Parkes; Stewart, Brush, Bonds, Martin, Devonshire, Holland, Goddard (Lampard), Cross, Brooking, Pike.

**LUTON TOWN:** Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Grealish, Saxby, Price, Hill, Stein, White (West), Antic, Moss.

**REFEREE:** D. Reeves (Middlesex).

**ATTENDANCE:** 27,933.

**GOALS:** Stewart (56), Moss (75, 88), all penalties.

**BOOKINGS:** Stephens (foul on Devonshire).



Raddy Antic tangles with Billy Bonds



Alan West makes an unsuccessful claim for a penalty as Brian Stein falls



What, me ref? Mike Saxby claims his innocence