

Antic tactics leaves Hammers frantic

WEST HAM DETAILS

WEST HAM 1, LUTON TOWN 2 80/81
Half-time: 0-0

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Donaghy, Saxby, Price; Hill, Grealish, Antic; Stein, White (West, 65 mins), Moss.

HAMMERS: Parkes, Stewart, Brush, Martin, Bonds; Devonshire, Brooking, Pike; Holland, Goddard (Lampard 57 mins), Cross.

THE GOALS: All penalties—Ray Stewart for West Ham, 57th minute; David Moss twice for the Town, one each side of Parkes, 75th and 88th minute.

OTHER STRIKES AT GOAL: West Ham, nine saved, ten off target and one by Goddard hit a post; Town: five saved and four wide.

ATTENDANCE: 27,933, the day's highest in the Second Division, and better than seven gates in the First.

ENTERTAINMENT: West Ham provided the flashy sparkle, particularly in the first half. The Town produced it where it mattered in the second.

REFEREE: Darryl Reeves, Denham—if the next 40 Second Division matches are as well controlled as this no one will complain.

BOOKING: Kirk Stephens for tripping Alan Devonshire.

LOOKING RIPE for a thrashing in the first half at Upton Park on Saturday, the Town came back to earn an astonishing victory in a match decided by three penalties and West Ham's inability to finish.

By half time the Hammers had apparently taken full control. A curling Raddy Antic shot, brilliantly saved by Phil Parkes, had been the only serious attacking threat by the Town.

At the other end Jake Findlay had to make a couple of world-class saves, one shot had hit a post and a succession of good chances had been put wide.

"We didn't go to defend," said Town boss David Pleat. "We were forced back by West Ham, and in the first half we weren't good enough."

West Ham's increasing frustration looked over in the 57th minute when Tony Grealish chased back after Pat Holland, and delayed his badly-timed tackle until the action had reached the penalty area. Ray Stewart scored from the spot.

Paul Price and Mike Saxby had been outstanding, particularly Price, who played debut boy Paul Goddard almost out of the game. After the goal, Goddard, who cost nearly a million, limped out of the action, I felt it was rather a case of the Town

finding the vital extra ounce of determination, taking a few more risks at the back and in midfield because they had to increase the pressure on Parkes.

With 25 minutes to go striker Steve White was pulled off to make way for Alan West, with Antic going into attack.

West proceeded to demonstrate that he is still a master of the instinctive through ball. The added bonus was that David Moss and Brian Stein always knew where and when the telling pass would arrive.

The Hammers had begun the day proudly parading the FA Cup, but they ended looking a very ordinary Second Division side, full of frantic endeavour but little else.

Moss and Stein stretched them, and in the 75th minute Alvin Martin tripped Moss to give the winger the Town's first goal of the season, from the penalty.

Two minutes from time Stein made Billy Bonds look like a one-footed gorilla, baffling him with close ball control. His feet outstripped the speed of brain and legs of Bonds, and the Town's second penalty was duly awarded for a trip and despatched by Moss.