



TONY COTTEE (centre) celebrates scoring West Ham's first goal

First class

82/83

PAUL WALSH lifted Luton clear of the relegation quagmire last night with three goals which reinforced Bobby Robson's faith in the future of English football.

The England manager was among a West Ham crowd of 21,435 which rose to salute Walsh's destruction of their own team.

This spectacular match belonged to Luton's 20-year-old World Cup prospect from the first minute, when he struck a post, to the last, when he hit the winner.

In between, Walsh did more than bring Luton from behind twice. As well as equalising both young Tony Cottee's first half goal and Sandy Clark's diving second half header, Walsh demonstrated the high level of technique and intelligence which are among the hallmarks of the true international footballer.

Robson said: 'I don't like to single out any one player after a fabulous match like that which was a credit to everyone. But Walsh was very sharp, especially on the turn, and his finishing was of the highest quality.'

Astonishing

'Overall this was an astonishing effort on a sticky pitch by teams playing their fourth match in ten days. The pace and the skill of the passing which they sustained was beyond anything the Germans and the Dutch could produce under such strenuous circumstances.'

'What we saw out there tonight was magnificent for English football.'

Pleat, his persistence with creative football vindicated by

Hat-trick Walsh hits Hammers

West Ham	2
Luton	3

By JEFF POWELL

both play football the way it should be played and I was thrilled with the match. I felt the result was right because in addition to Paul's goals, we forced West Ham to clear off the line four times.'

Walsh took a modest view of his achievement, saying: 'The goals haven't been coming for me recently and it's a good job they did tonight because the last time Mr Robson saw me I played badly against Norwich and went off injured. Most important of all it's a great result for Luton.'

Walsh's hat-trick overshadowed 17-year old Cottee's second goal in his second senior game. This time his speed of reflex and movement were rewarded as Gallagher and Clark combined to manoeuvre

Pike's 20th-minute free-kick into his path.

Luton, twice denied by goal-line clearances in the opening minutes, kept building their attacks around the understanding between England men Walsh and Ricky Hill whose pass sent Walsh away for the equaliser five minutes before half-time.

West Ham got their noses in front again in the 65th minute. Pike's 30 yard volley struck the bar and Clark headed the bouncing ball over the line.

A virtuoso goal by Walsh — chesting down a pass from Moss and twisting among a pack of defenders before unleashing a cross shot — put Luton level again in the 74th minute.

Critical

The loss of England's centre half Alvin Martin with a pelvic injury two minutes from time proved critical for West Ham. Ray Stewart moved into the centre of defence but slipped as he went for a Stephens' through ball, leaving Walsh to scamper away, and deceive Parkes once more.

Hammers' manager John Lyall said: 'We got what we deserved . . . nothing. We lacked discipline and authority and the defeat could have been more severe. With so many defenders already injured, it is worrying that Martin must go for an X-ray in the morning.'