

LUTON'S URGENT NEED

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WEST HAM's relief at salvaging a point could not obscure the urgency of David Pleat's search for two quality players to protect Luton's First Division status, writes **Michael Calvin**.

Mr Pleat, who missed this low-key draw to assess the potential of Grimsby's Kevin Drinkell, intends to use the money provided by his reconstituted board to strengthen his attack and mid-field.

Yet, for all the Luton manager's laudable commitment to attacking football, he may be better advised to strengthen his defence.

Paul Elliott, who will have the plaster off his broken right leg today, is unlikely to play a relevant role in the immediate battle against relegation and though Colin Todd is near full fitness, there is a naivety in defence which may become a liability.

Walford's error

Fortunately West Ham were in a benevolent mood after taking an early lead through Whitton's well struck free-kick. An appalling mistake by Walford allowed Stein to equalise before Nwajiobi, one of several developing Luton players who have yet to find consistency, gave them the lead.

West Ham's resilience resulted in Martin's equaliser five minutes from time. John Lyall, the West Ham manager, reckoned that Luton, ironically, may have profited from the hamstringing pull which threatens to blight Droy's career.

The giant defender, whose departure allowed Parker to underline his promise in midfield, fears that he may not play again before his month's loan from Chelsea expires.

Droy had difficulty in dealing with the nimble Goddard but stressed: "I still feel I can do a job for someone. If I go back to Chelsea and play in the reserves for the rest of the season there may be nothing more for me after that than retirement."

Luton.—Findlay; Breacker, Donaghy, Turner, Droy (Parker, 33), North, Hill, Stein, Elliott, Bunn, Nwajiobi.

West Ham.—McAlister; Stewart, Walford (Swindlehurst, 78), Allen, Martin, Gale, Whitton, Goddard, Cottee, Bonds, Pike.