

## W Ham 0, Luton 1

LUTON edged out a haphazard West Ham in an encounter which belied the reputation of both clubs for enterprise and skill, writes Mike Regan.

A Harford penalty three minutes into the second half earned the visitors their narrow victory, but purists seeking some early season sparkle to improve football's tarnished image found little comfort at Upton Park yesterday.

The opening 45 minutes, largely bereft of goalmouth incidents, were eminently forgettable. Luton, to their credit, showed a greater commitment to attack but there was little to quicken the pulses on the terraces.

A disappointing 14,000 crowd did see Martin bundle the ball over the line after a quarter of an hour but the Hammers skipper was denied a goal because of an infringement against the keeper.

Hartford's 48th minute penalty did serve to provide some impetus to the game. Nwajiobi prised open the Hammers defence with a darting run before releasing the ball to Stein who was upended by a clumsy Stewart challenge. Luton's lanky striker rifled the spot kick past Parkes without hesitation.

Stung belatedly into action, West Ham were nearly back on equal terms within a minute but Ward's awkward angled shot was parried by Dibble.

Undeterred, Hammers pushed forward in search of an equaliser although they lacked cohesion with new signings McAvennie and Ward being assimilated into the side.