

THERE was a smile on David Pleat's face when someone asked about Frank McAvennie.

Sensible planning and resolute play had ensured that West Ham's scoring sensation didn't get a sniff.

"I think we handled the problem well," said Luton's manager, who almost signed McAvennie last summer.

If it wasn't Steve Foster's experience and strength it was Mal Donaghy's covering pace, or a full-back tucked in tight to cover.

So no joy for the sharp Scot as West Ham struggled to maintain an unbeaten run that stretches to eight League games.

Problems

"All credit to them," added Pleat. "We put them under a lot of pressure and they weathered it well."

Most of Luton's best work was done after half-time when their surges along both flanks often had West Ham at full stretch.

What had been a moderate game in a tricky wind

suddenly came alive as Luton threatened to take control.

With McAvennie and Tony Cottee clamped down there were few opportunities for West Ham to go forward and they were forced to rely on counter attacks.

They do that well away from home, with a steady back line and men capable of sending the ball into the right places.

This time they had problems because Peter Nicholas tackled them down in midfield and kept Luton's momentum going.

"We thought North was really a centre-half when his name appeared on the sheet," said West Ham's coach Ronnie Boyce.

Frank

**Luton 0
West Ham 0**

By KEN JONES



McAVENNIE

"He used to be a goalkeeper," corrected Pleat, referring to the young man who was brought in to play up front with the dangerous Mick Harford.

North looked a novice when making his First Division debut against Manchester United earlier this season.

Now he was back again