

Bruno sees a fight called off

OBVIOUSLY, Alvin Martin and Brian Stein were more intent on making an impression on Frank Bruno rather than England manager Bobby Robson, who were both watching.

Martin, the West Ham captain and Luton's Brian Stein were sent off for fighting as the Hammers presented their credentials as London's leading challengers for the title.

The England centre-back and the former England striker exchanged blows in the middle of the pitch after a running argument, and deserved their dismissals by referee John Deakin nine minutes from the end.

The incident, perhaps inspired by the presence of Bruno, overshadowed an otherwise trouble-free match in which West Ham emerged from

a lethargic start for a convincing victory.

Goals by Tony Cottee after 41 minutes and Tony Gale after 58 secured their first home win since the opening day and lifted them to fourth in the First Division. Only several fine saves by Sealey prevented a more emphatic triumph.

Luton, badly missing striker Mick Harford, recovering from his third knee operation of the year, were swept aside after a promising start and now face a struggle to emulate the achievements of recent years under former manager, David Pleat.

In recent times, Luton had enjoyed several profitable visits to East London. Yesterday, however, they lacked the fire power to convert attractive approach work.

Martin, Stein go

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By ROBERT ALEXANDER
West Ham 2, Luton 0

West Ham, by contrast, were not only sound in defence, but more than capable of holding their own in the rugged challenges. In Cottee and McAvennie they also have forwards with pace to embarrass anybody.

Luton, to their credit, did not take the precaution of adding a sweeper to the back four to counter this threat. They con-

tented themselves with a reshuffle which brought in mid-field man Preece for winger Nwajobi.

For more than 20 minutes it seemed that their positive play would pay off as West Ham dozed in the sun.

Having escaped lightly in the third minute when Martin had a goal disallowed, Luton carried the game to their opponents with their familiar style and flair.

A fine move on the right by Hill and Johnson created a chance for Nicholas, and Brian Stein broke through on the left, but Parkes was untroubled as Martin twice cut out the danger.

These close shaves appeared to wake West Ham, and Orr, Walford and McAvennie all stretched Sealey to make good

saves before Cottee put them ahead four minutes before the interval.

The goal followed a left-wing corner by Keen, flicked on by McAvennie. The ball fell to Parris whose drive through a crowded area was deflected by Cottee from five yards.

West Ham raised the pace after the interval, and Sealey saved splendidly from a McAvennie header before Gale put them further ahead.

This also followed a Keen corner, this time on the right. Gale, totally unmarked, was able to pick his spot with a powerful header from 12 yards.

West Ham: Parkes; Stewart, Parris; Gale, Martin, Walford; Keen, McAvennie, Dickens (Orr 45), Cottee, Orr

Luton: Sealey; Johnson, Grimes; Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy; Hill, B. Stein, Newell (M. Stein), Wilson, Preece.

Referee: J. Deakin (S Glam).