

Nicholas destroys Hammers

86/87

LUTON manager John Moore spoke in his programme notes of the influence of the "unsung heroes" in his high-flying side.

One such player, Peter Nicholas, orchestrated a victory which must surely end talk of Luton's championship bid being pure fantasy.

Welsh international Nicholas not only scored his first goal since joining Luton two years ago, but his fighting spirit and commitment initiated a comeback which seemed unlikely as West Ham dominated the opening 40 minutes.

Luton's eighth League game without defeat pushes them

by MARK DEMUTH
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into fourth place with everything to play for in the remaining two months of the season. West Ham, are now as good as out of the title race.

Sluggish

Luton, with one of the best home records in the First Division, looked surprisingly sluggish in the first half, and Tony Cottee's eighth-minute goal for West Ham promised to be the first of many, with Cottee, McAvennie and Dickens exploiting the space Luton were giving.

West Ham were left to

regret a number of missed chances when Nicholas equalised four minutes before half time with a 25-yard rocket shot.

Luton's winning goal was the result of a marvellously-worked free kick. Ashley Grimes dummied the ball, Nicholas sent a short pass to Ricky Hill and he played it into the path of the advancing Grimes who clipped the ball over Parkes from six yards.

West Ham boss John Lyall said: "The outcome was disappointing because I thought we were very creative in the first 45 minutes. But to be fair, Luton had that little bit of expertise and used it to good effect in the second half."