

Small opportunity makes an impact

9/1/92

Luton Town.....0, West Ham.....1 **Clive Ellis**

MIKE SMALL, the striker who had lost his scoring touch, gave West Ham their first victory in 10 league matches to ease their depression.

West Ham's win, in a desperately scrappy game, was a trifle harsh on Luton, who returned to the bottom of the First Division on the strength of Southampton's victory, but the resilience of Billy Bonds' side could not be faulted.

Small, put on the substitutes' bench after scoring only once in two months, conjured up the crucial goal in the 70th minute, only 15 minutes after replacing the ineffective McAvennie.

West Ham had taken off Slater at half-time and their tactical headaches multiplied when Bishop, their captain, sustained a rib injury on the hour after a fierce challenge from Pembridge.

Bishop's mobility was greatly reduced, but it was his astute ball into the penalty area which gave Small the chance to shoot left-footed.

Sutton would probably have dealt with the effort

comfortably, but it took a deflection off Peake and looped over the goalkeeper.

Luton's best chances in the second half fell to Stein, still without a goal in his 25 appearances this season, but he saw a shot scrambled away for a corner by Miklosko and a minute from the end of normal time headed Oakes' cross just wide.

The opening 10 minutes suggested that Luton were capable of extending their sequence of three successive home victories without conceding a goal.

Miklosko saved well after six minutes from Harvey and two minutes later the West Ham goalkeeper stopped Kamara's shot with his legs.

Luton missed the directness and power in the air of their suspended leading scorer, Harford, and West Ham were able to frustrate them by packing midfield.

West Ham made few chances themselves but two minutes into stoppage time at the break Foster almost gave them the lead when he headed Thomas' cross against the bar.