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 Opposition: West Ham United
 Competition: League

Times	British Soccer Wk	

THE TIMES

Goal by Saunders puts West Ham in deeper trouble
 Liverpool 1 - West Ham United 0
 DESPITE a performance of great commitment, West Ham United's plight at the foot of the first division worsened appreciably at Anfield last night where an early goal from Dean Saunders settled the outcome.

Earlier in the week, Billy Bonds, the West Ham manager, had said that drawn games would do little, or nothing, to help preserve his club's status, irrespective of the quality of the opposition.

So West Ham's attitude was victory or nothing on a ground where they have not won since 1963. But although Liverpool seemed reluctant to perform with their normal, calm assurance West ham did not carry the firepower to seriously embarrass Wright and his colleagues.

Less than 24 hours after declaring himself to be fully recovered from a knee injury which has severally restricted his senior appearances this season, Whelan, the Republic of Ireland international, was placed back on the Liverpool casualty list after a training accident, his place in central midfield went to Redknapp.

Although his squad is nearing full strength, Graeme Souness, the Liverpool manager, continues to sign new talent and shortly before the kick-off he completed the transfer of Lee Jones, the talented young Wrexham forward.

The departure of Jones from the Racecourse Ground will net the impoverished fourth division club an initial down payment of Pounds 300,000, with a similar sum to be paid once he has made an unspecified number of first-team appearances.

West Ham, whose cavalier approach belied their plight, found themselves a goal behind even before they had constructed a move of any consequence in their opponents' territory.

No more than three minutes had elapsed when Redknapp picked up a harmless-looking crossfield pass. Instead of moving the ball on to a colleague he shot from 30 yards with venomous power. Miklosko reached the ball, but, not surprisingly, was unable to hold it and Saunders reacted quickly to nip forward to tap the rebound across the line.

West Ham's failure to make the most of their scoring opportunities is one of the main reasons why their first division future is under threat. This flaw in their make-up was exposed again for, had their finishing matched their ambition and invention, they could have been leading halfway through the first period. Allen, although clearly offside when he collected a pass from Bishop, was denied by Grobbelaar and Keen was guilty of a similarly inept piece of marksmanship when he collected a fortuitous rebound at the far post, only to strike his shot straight at the goalkeeper. Having squandered two good chances, the visitors declined to capitalise on an even more inviting opening in the 19th minute when Small ran straight through the Liverpool rearguard only to mishit his shot, so allowing Jones to clear the ball off the line. Simply by using tight marking to nullify the threat of Small, Liverpool reduced their opponents' effectiveness as an attacking force. But despite enjoying only limited success in a congested midfield, West Ham continued their game pursuit of an equalising goal. Allen went the closest to punishing Liverpool when he fired in a splendid drive from 30 yards. But Grobbelaar was more than equal to the challenged and despatched the ball into the heart of the Kop with a contemptuous flick of his right hand.

LIVERPOOL: B Grobbelaar; R Jones, B Venison, S Nicol, J Redknapp, M Wright, D Saunders, R Houghton (sub: M Marsh), M Thomas, J Barnes (sub: R Rosenthal), S McManaman.

WEST HAM UNITED: L Miklosko; K Brown, J Dicks, A Gale, S Potts, M Thomas (sub: M Rush), I Bishop, K Keen, M Small, M Allen, S Slater.

Referee: J Rushton.

BRITISH SOCCER WEEK

Unlucky Irons hit bottom
 Unlucky West Ham stay rooted to the bottom of the first division after losing at Anfield to an early goal by Liverpool's Dean Saunders.

But Liverpool's injury jinx was yet to strike again, Ronnie Whelan failing to make the line-up after his FA Cup comeback on Sunday, while fellow Republic of Ireland international midfielder Ray Houghton limped off after just 16 minutes.

Liverpool took the lead after three minutes, youngster Jamie Redknapp unleashing a fierce long range shot which Hammers' keeper Ludek Miklosko could only beat down. Striker Saunders pounced to slot home the loose ball.

Liverpool continued to enjoy most of the possession, but determined West Ham made sure Bruce Grobbelaar was the busier keeper in the lively first half.

He saved brilliantly from Martin Allen and Kevin Keen, and parried Mike Small's low shot for full back Rob Jones to complete the clearance by hammering accurately into touch across the face of his goal.

But the first half's most spectacular save came from Miklosko, palming a vicious angled shot by Steve McManaman up and away after 36 minutes.

It took Liverpool until the 69th minute to trouble the keeper again, Mike Marsh driving straight into his midriff.

After 77 minutes Ronnie Rosenthal, on less than a minute as substitute for John Barnes, raced on to Michael Thomas' fine pass and fired in a shot which Miklosko parried well. McManaman tried to curl the rebound into the far top corner, but Miklosko acted brilliantly, hurling himself to his left to pluck the ball out of the air.