

Pleat's pleasure doubled

84/85
Luton 2
Huddersfield 0

By JIM HOOLEY

LUTON manager David Pleat wore a smile as wide as the Cheshire Cat . . . but it had little to do with reaching the last 16 of the FA Cup.

No, Pleat's pleasure was all about signing the man who could help keep Luton in the First Division.

He emerged from 90 minutes of transfer talks after Luton's dramatic fourth-round dismissal of unlucky Huddersfield, to announce Peter Nicholas would sign from Crystal Palace today. The fee, probably £125,000.

Nicholas, 25, will almost certainly make his home debut against Tottenham on Saturday, but won't help in Luton's bid for Wembley because he is Cup-tied.

But such is the precariousness of the club's position in the First Division's bottom three that Pleat said: 'The last 16 looks very inviting but really the Cup is irrelevant to us.'

'We have to stay up. That's where our energies are being directed.'

Pleat also revealed he is making every effort to keep England midfielder Ricky Hill at the club. Hill's extra dimensions of skill and vision were major factors behind Luton's passage into the fifth round.

Palace also watched the Luton game and may bid this week for midfielder Wayne Turner.

LUTON : Donaghy (33mins.), Stein (56)