



MICK HARFORD

Harford makes a point

84/85

LUTON may have an FA Cup semi-final to look forward to next month but the more pressing problem is their First Division survival. And they did themselves no favours by scoring a series of clear-cut chances after the break when they emerged as marginally the better side.

Perhaps Luton were still suffering the delayed shock from the trauma of the riot during and after their midweek Cup victory over Millwall.

But one thing is certain. Had there been a little more steadiness when it mattered, the extra and vital points were there for the taking.

And Mick Harford especially was far from blameless when he could have undoubtedly won the match for Luton.

Four minutes from the end he was perfectly placed to nod the ball home from Meka Nwajobi's cross.

But his close-range header lacked the necessary venom and Martin Hodge, with an agile spring, managed to get a hand to the ball.

Escaped

Wednesday escaped several times before that: Luton showed a brief glimpse of the form that has taken them just a match away from Wembley.

Brian Stein caught Mark Smith in possession and set up Nwajobi. His shot was well off target and he erred in similar fashion shortly afterwards.

Wednesday's outside chance of a place in Europe has undoubtedly dipped towards the horizon. And it seems the season's promise is to end in mediocrity as they were booed off the field.

A sixth minute goal by Imre Varadi—his 21st of the season—pointed the way to victory.

Lee Chapman's centre was chested down by Gary Shelton and the leading scorer pounced to hook the ball quickly past Les Sealey.

But Luton, sensing that the day might just belong to them put more spirit into their game. The 55th minute equaliser came when Stein took a pass from David Preece in his stride, beat Mike Lyons and shot against an upright.

Harford had a simple task to nudge the ball over the line.

Wednesday's best winning chance fell to Shelton midway through the second half but he

by PETER WELBOURN
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hit the side netting instead of the target.

It was that sort of day for Wednesday. Come to think of it, it was that sort of day all round — although Luton went home cursing their own ineptitude.

Wednesday manager Howard Wilkinson was joined by Luton chief David Pleat in backing the public condemnation of six Wednesday hooligans, banned by the club and named over the loudspeaker after recent court appearances.

Said Wilkinson: "I and the players do not consider these people are fans. They are hooligans — nothing more nothing less."

Said Pleat: "It was a tremendous thing to do — and especially important to us after our midweek experience."

"I have had hundreds of letters since the happenings of Wednesday from all sorts of people. They were all of the same mind in condemning the scenes during and after the match."

SHEFF WEDS. Hodge; Shirliff, Blair, Smith, Lyons, Worthington, Marwood, Jonsson, Varadi, Chapman, Shelton. Sub: Morris.

LUTON. Sealey; Breacker, Thomas, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, Nwajobi, Preece. Sub: Turner.