

# DON GOT IT ALL WRONG, SAYS PLEAT

Luton 2 Arsenal 2: by JAMES MOSSOP

WERE ARSENAL'S defenders being "struck repeatedly with a heavy-headed stick?" According to my Oxford Dictionary they were, because that is the definition of the word Don Howe chose—bludgeoning—to describe Luton's contribution to a hectic tie.

His rival manager David Pleat was distinctly unimpressed after Howe had said: "There was a lot of bludgeoning going on in our box. I was surprised by it. I don't really think that is Luton's style.

Pleat countered: "We tried to play football—let's have it right. I don't think we bludgeoned."

I don't understand what he's talking about. I thought he would be pleased to be going away with a replay."

It all seemed part of the continuing saga of two normally friendly clubs who began to fall out two weeks ago when Luton lost 2-1 in the League at Highbury and had four players booked.

The word that day was "competitiveness." After the latest encounter it was "bludgeon," which is rather strong way of saying that the physical presence of Luton centre-forward Mick Harford in Arsenal's penalty area upset them.

He was booked for the second of two challenges on Arsenal keeper John Lukic in the first half, and it might be a blessing if Tuesday's replay at Highbury is postponed.

## Exciting

The pitch is frozen, the under-soil heating has broken down, and the delay might help to take the sting out of current feelings.

Maybe Luton should have won at Kenilworth Road. With their exciting forward Brian Stein—a goalscorer who likes to strike from deep positions—suffering a knee injury, their chances of reaching the quarter-finals may have gone.

If this happens, how they will rue those late minutes in this match when Ricky Hill, enjoying the kind of inspired form that will surely have England coach Howe purring to England manager Bobby Robson, coaxed and carried Luton towards a winner that would not come.

It was a fine Cup tie, full of tension and action as the players wove their intricate patterns across Luton's plastic carpet, despite the frost in the surface making it more difficult than usual.

If the supporters wanted goals to cheer a raw Bedfordshire day, four in the first half seemed a generous quota. And with play surging in all directions during that period the share-out seemed far.

## Threat

Hill, pushing himself into Arsenal's penalty area where he was a threat all afternoon, struck first. He demonstrated his close control as he took a pass from Marc North with his back to goal, held off a challenge from Martin Keown and punished Lukic.

Arsenal, despite the alarming disinterest of Charlie Nicholas, went quickly for an equaliser. After Mitchell Thomas had headed off the line from Viv Anderson, Ian Allinson struck a 15th-minute left-footer that flew in off Les Sealey's right-hand post.

There seemed nothing wrong with Mal Donaghy's 26th-minute tackle on Nicholas, whose show of agony was as

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**CUP SANDWICH:**  
Arsenal's Kenny Sansom and Martin Keown line up to beat Mick Harford

spectacular as it was brief. But Graham Rix's free kick was knocked out to Tony Woodcock and a crisp cross was headed past Sealey by David Rocastle.

**LUTON.**—Sealey; Johnson, Thomas, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, North, Preece, Sub: Parker.

**ARSENAL.**—Lukic; Anderson, Sansom, Williams, O'Leary, Keown, Allinson, Rocastle, Nicholas, Woodcock, Rix, Sub: Mariner.