

Give it to

Q P R 1,
Luton 1

85/86

By KEN MONTGOMERY

Mike

LANKY Luton strikers Mike Newell and Mick Harford will argue until the cows come home about who did score their priceless 62nd minute equaliser.

Last night manager David Pleat broke the stalemate, crediting the goal to £85,000 bargain buy Newell.

The whodunnit came in the 63rd minute of a disappointing clash of the plastic pitch pioneers, which had fans in the bigger than usual 16,000 Rangers crowd chanting: "What a load of rubbish."

Power

From David Preece's free-kick, England fringe man Harford rose to power a header back across the box and goalwards.

The big ex-Birmingham striker was already hailing his 18th hit of the season when Newell popped up to help it home.

Newell immediately raised an arm to claim it as his 22nd goal of the season. Their Luton teammates didn't seem sure about who they should congratulate.

Yet that equaliser was no more than Luton deserved. In fact the Hatters — Rangers' bogey team on Loftus Road's artificial carpet—should have taken maximum points for the fourth time in as many visits since they ripped up the grass in London W12.

In Ricky Hill and Mitchell Thomas, two late contenders for an England World Cup squad place, they had the two most skilful players on parade.

But there was no disappointment from Pleat. He said: "Having gone a goal behind, I have got to be satisfied with the draw.

Rangers boss Jim Smith wasn't so happy with his team's performance. "England manager Bobby Robson was down on the guest list to watch the match. He didn't turn up—and he wasn't a bad judge," was his wry comment.

The Hatters had by far the better of the exchanges and as early as the eighth minute Harford had a powerful angled drive headed off the line by the impressive Steve Wicks.

In the 22nd minute Steve Foster scissor-kicked just wide when Hill set up a half chance, and Luton were entitled to look stunned when big John Byrne put Rangers ahead nine minutes before the break.

It came from a Warren Neill free-kick, headed back to Byrne by Wicks. The big striker thumped his shot home off the inside of a post with Rangers first shot of the match.

Man of the match: Ricky Hill (Luton).