

Cool Mick

95/86

ON A DAY so freezing the pre-match fall of icy snow had to be scooped off the press box 'phones, Luton still managed to produce—at times—neat, short-passing football as crisp as crackling bacon.

David Pleat's men also produced the only decisive moment of the match—a scorching 16th minute header from their powerful striker Mick Harford (via David Preece's far post corner) which beat even Wednesday's midweek Cup hero, Martin Hodge.

I shall remember that split-second piece of soaring action from Luton's England hopeful, Harford—but not much else, I'm afraid, on this sub-zero afternoon.

Luton 1 Sheff Wed 0: by ALAN HOBY

Much has been said—mostly critical—about plastic pitches lately. But one thing is certain. On a day when 130 tons of snow had to be removed in five hours by 25 Luton helpers starting at 6.30 a.m., the Kenilworth Road artificial surface looked playable. But only, of course, if you play the ball to the feet!

Luton, although not at their best—they lacked penetration—did this. Peter Nicholas ran the midfield, spraying the ball out to Preece, Ricky Hill and the forwardrunning Rob John son.

Capable

At the back Steve Foster and Mal Donaghy dealt capably with the few threats posed by hard-running Wednesday.

Indeed, the whole team pending Cup replay against Arsenal—although they miss looked in good heart for their injured striker, Brian Stein. At least, Luton always

try to play football, whatever the conditions.

But Wednesday? Everything they tried, failed! And for some sterling saves by 'keeper Hodge—notably twice early on from the busy Preece and one acrobatic block and tip-round from promising Mike Newell—the visitors would have been in even worse trouble.

For all their vigour and enthusiasm they hardly muster a decent shot. Their long ball game too—belting the ball upfield—is certainly not suited to lively synthetic pitches.

And when they tried to emulate Luton's short passing game they failed miserably. It was not their day.

Glynn Snodin reminded us of better things when he fired in a couple of snorting free-kicks, but the visitors' man-of-the match was central defender Paul Hart aided by the equally robust Peter Shirliff. Both were booked for uncompromising tackles.

There was nothing else to cheer about for the visiting fans on a day fit only for seagulls and reindeer. As it was, 10,206 stoics did turn up, despite the weather, and cheer on their sides. They all deserved medals!