

HEATH'S TOP

LUTON were on their way to avenging last season's FA Cup semi-final defeat when they failed to jump as high as Graeme Sharp.

Sharp got to Gary Stevens' free-kick and insisted afterwards: "It was a clean header."

That ended the confusion and relieved Mal Donaghy, whose head had deemed to send the ball into his own net.

Until that moment of drama in the 64th minute things were looking bleak for the champions, but they fought back within seconds of sending Adrian Heath sprinting from the substitute's bench.

Heath, whose career was in serious jeopardy a year ago, sneaked in for a 77th minute goal that earned Everton a replay at Goodison Park next Wednesday.

Heath's equaliser could have been a moment of total disaster for Luton, but far from panicking they surged forward in search of a victory.

The match took that dramatic turn just when it seemed Luton had done enough to win a place in the semi-finals. They went in front in the 22nd minute when Mick Harford finished off a move that began with Peter Nicholas and was carried on by big Steve Foster.

Southall managed to beat

SHARP'S TOFFEE

Luton 2,
Everton 2

By KEN JONES

out Foster's header, but the ball ran free and Harford finished at speed on the far post to thrust it into the net.

Luton, who were playing their fourth game in seven days, had earlier shown the strain, with neatness that has characterised much of their play this season rarely there despite Nicholas's influence in midfield.

Free

They were missing Brian Stein, and his brother Mark although a lively mover does not present the same threat.

Nevertheless there were things to admire in Luton's work on a synthetic surface that seemed to trouble most of the Everton players.

Harford was always going to be a threat in the air and the absence of Welsh international Kevin Ratcliffe from the heart of defence

left them without the assurance he brings to their play under pressure.

Luton's problem was providing Harford with the right sort of service and on the day they didn't get the ball to him often enough.

With Foster dealing competently with most of Everton's attempts to penetrate with long passes, Luton gradually settled although Lineker almost brought Everton level with a flashing header after Richardson had been sent clear along the left.

Peter Reid began to match Nicholas in midfield and was the source of some smart moves. There was a hint that Luton were coming back into it when Stein turned smartly before slicing his shot wide. It was a taste of things to come because Stein put Luton up in the 63rd minute.

Everton's strategy is to



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push forward compressing the game in midfield, gambling on the possibility of being caught square and without a cover.

It was exactly what occurred when Nicholas and King combined to send Stein sprinting through the middle. He was left with only Southall to beat and although the Welsh international did well to block the ball it ran free and Stein recovered to shoot into an empty net.

Man of the Match: Peter Reid (Everton).

SOCCER

ON TV

■ The Big Match on ITV (2.30) comes live from Old Trafford, where Manchester United meet West Ham in their FA Cup fifth round replay.



■ TAKE THAT: Luton's marksman Mick Harford signals the goal that stunned Everton at Kenilworth Road.