



86/87 (FAC)

Liverpool pitched out

Luton 3 Liverpool 0

By BRIAN SCOVELL

LUTON, thrown out of the Littlewoods Cup by the League, took a giant step towards a Wembley final last night with an historic victory in the Real Thing.

They did not just beat Kenny Dalglish's Liverpool ... by the end of this FA Cup third round second replay they had humiliated the holders and League champions.

Luton's reward is a fourth round match on Kenilworth Road's artificial pitch on Saturday against the instigators of the plastic revolution, QPR.

Smarting

Dalglish's thoughts on that match — already being hailed as the Plastic Pitch Cup Final — may not be printable if his comments after last night's defeat are anything to go by.

Liverpool's player-manager, still smarting over Luton's failure to reach Anfield for their first scheduled replay two weeks ago at the height of the freeze, repeated his bitter criticism of Luton's artificial surface that followed the original goalless draw

between the sides.

Dalglish said: 'The dice have been loaded against us since the draw was made.'

'We had tough games against Manchester City, Everton and Newcastle before taking on Luton again, while they only played once in that period.'

Dalglish even questioned Luton's right to be in the Cup. 'If you can't turn up for a match, you should not be in the competition.'

'We don't like artificial surfaces. I am sure the people who play on them don't like them but they can't say so. But these are all contributory factors.'

Credit

Dalglish, however, agreed that Luton were the better side last night and, given their fierce will to win, no one should dismiss their chances of making a second FA Cup final appearance to add to the one back in 1959. But you would not have guessed that from manager John Moore's appearance after such a night of glory.

A grim-faced Moore, orange juice in hand, walked in to a Press conference afterwards to say cryptically: 'I want to talk about the team, they're the ones who got the result.' But he didn't enlighten us any further.

Moore must be given credit for adding other qualities to the skill left behind by his predecessor, David Pleat. Attitude is the most important one and it was typified by skipper Steve Foster and the man playing in front of him, Peter Nicholas.



Luton's Mike Newell and Gary Gillespie battle for a cross
Picture BARRY BEATTIE

But it was Brian Stein who brought the Liverpool castle crashing down. Playing just behind strikers Mick Harford and Mike Newell, Stein had several worthy attempts before his brilliantly struck free kick gave Luton the lead in the 34th minute.

With Ian Rush clearly not fit, few in the 14,687 crowd, Luton's biggest of the season, could see Liverpool coming back after that. Luton goalkeeper Les Sealey had just two long shots to deal with and can rarely have had such a relaxed night.

The second goal in the 78th

minute followed a penalty conceded by Jan Molby when he tripped Stein. Dalglish did not dispute that one and Harford, on the fringe of the England team six months ago, converted for his first goal of a season interrupted by a knee operation.

Nine minutes from time Foster, who had already hit the woodwork with a 25-yard shot, stormed through again and his deflected pass found Newell. The young striker, once on Liverpool's books, shot gleefully past Bruce Grobbelaar to follow on his hat-trick against his old club three months ago.