

Pleat's pride as Luton go third

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Luton Town ... 3, Tottenham Hotspur ... 1

DAVID PLEAT could not hide his admiration for Luton Town, the team he built for roughly the price of £750,000 Richard Gough, as they comprehensively beat a Tottenham side that has so far cost more than £1.5 million to rebuild, writes **Christopher Davies**.

Mr Pleat restricted himself to a polite: "Luton deserved to win and scored three excellent goals." But it was obvious that the Tottenham manager was full of pride for the club left in a wave of emotion and bitterness last summer.

While the championship race almost inevitably seems to have developed into a private affair between Liverpool and Everton, Luton are poised in third place for their best ever season and ready to pounce should the title favourites falter.

Small squad

Luton's remaining fixtures are mainly against mid-table teams and captain Harford said: "On paper, we should win our home games. If we play as we did at Southampton in midweek we have no chance, but we know what we are capable of.

"Realistically, we should not be up there with the big clubs, considering the small squad we have.

The architect of Luton's victory, which could easily have been by a wider margin, was

Ricky Hill, who has rejected a new contract.

Mr Pleat may return once more to Luton for the services of Hill, although his previous acquisition, £250,000 full-back Mitchell Thomas, had a torrid time against Hill.

It was Hill who collected a poor clearance by Thomas in the fifth minute to set up a superbley-struck goal by Harford.

In the 54th minute, Newell drove the ball past Clemence for his first goal in 11 matches and, although Waddle pulled one back after 62 minute, McDonough converted Hill's pass four minutes from the end to give Luton a notable victory.

Spurs face an anxious wait about Glenn Hoddle, whose groin injury may even keep him out of the FA Cup semi-final against Watford on Saturday week.

Luton: Sealey; Breacker, Grimes, Nicholas, S. North, Donaghy, Hill, B. Stein, Newell, Harford, McDonough.

Tottenham: Clemence; Stevens, M. Thomas, Hodge (Ardiles, 57), Gough, Mabbutt, C. Allen, P. Aeen, Waddle, Hoddle, Claesen.