

Cardiff crash out in disgrace



DAVID Preece saw Luton into the last eight with a goal which brought drama, shame and disgrace to Ninian Park. A battle of giant-killers was marred by players being hit by missiles, two pitch invasions, crowd trouble at the end and referee Roger Dilkes being slammed by Cardiff boss Eddie May.

Little midfielder Preece sparked the real controversy as he celebrated his

Preece clincher sparks mayhem

By RICHARD LEWIS Cardiff 1 Luton 2

disputed 70th-minute winner when a Cardiff fan ran on to the pitch to try to assault him.

He was stopped by Preece's Luton teammates before being dragged away by stewards as the notorious reputation of the home fans fell to a new low.

Cardiff already have a £25,000 suspended sentence hanging over their heads for crowd problems at Fulham this

season. They will now surely face a severe rap.

Almost every Luton player was hit by coins or missiles and Scott Oakes, scorer of their first goal, had severe bruising to his right arm after a three-inch brick was thrown at him.

"It was hostile out there," said Oakes. "I've never known an atmosphere like it. It was frightening. At the end of the game there were 10p

and 2p coins everywhere on the pitch."

Furious May insisted Preece's winner should not have stood. Luton's Ceri Hughes was running back from a clearly off-side position as the ball was played through to Preece, though linesman Brian Rice kept his flag down.

But play was allowed to go on with referee Roger Dilkes ruling Hughes was not interfering with play and Preece duly slotted the ball under goalkeeper

Phil Kite. May stormed: "Amateurs are getting in the way of professionals in this game. It was a ridiculous decision. I don't care what anyone says or if I get into trouble, we were cheated."

Football in the end was forgotten, though Luton have the twin towers in their sights after having too much class for Second Division Cardiff.

Oakes took advantage of poor defending to fire Luton in front in the 39th minute. But sub Phil Stant's brilliant shot on the turn levelled the scores after 65 minutes.