

PLEATY'S A



93/94
(SAG) By BRIAN WOOLNOUGH
West Ham 0 Luton 0

ROMANCE is still alive in the FA Cup thanks to David Pleat's Luton.

The First Division should be proud of them in this season of cup giant-killings.

We thought that Bolton would provide the quarter-final shock. Perhaps Wolves.

It turned out to be Luton and how they deserved their replay at Kenilworth Road a week tomorrow.

There have been 11 Premiership scalps for the First Division this season in 26 David and Goliath clashes.

This was so close to another and West Ham will be grateful to still have a chance of an all-London semi-final at Wembley with Chelsea.

There was no doubt that this was Luton's night. They showed a capacity Upton Park crowd and live Sky TV audience just why the First Division have closed the gap on their big brothers.

Warned

Pleat has done a remarkable job with them, buying and selling, moulding and manipulating an impressive side who do not look out of place with the big guns left in the competition.

And West Ham must go to their tiny ground knowing that Luton are unbeaten in front of their own fans this year.

Pleat's side have had nine home games in that time since Christmas and won eight of them. Billy Bonds, you have been warned.

David Preece was the best player on the pitch, supporting his defence and linking Luton together.

In front of him, Scott Oakes has the pace, skill and potential to go all the way, while behind him David Greene, 20, was superb in only his third game.

John Dreyer also needs a special mention. Twice in the opening five minutes he made vital goalmouth interceptions.

Dreyer was the backbone, Preece the workrate. If only Luton could have found a cutting edge to finish it.

Pleat had told his players before the game to puff out their chests with pride because Cup quarter and semi-finals to a club like Luton come around only once in a lifetime.

His players responded like demons. I do not agree with

HOME WINNER . . Luton's Des Linton is halted in his tracks by Hammers Matt Holmes