

Luton force replay in dogged performance

93/94 (FAC)

By Christopher Davies

West Ham Utd 0 Luton Town 0

LUTON'S dreams of reaching their second FA Cup final were kept alive by a spirited performance at Upton Park, where they combined the attacking flair expected from a David Pleat side with some determined defending.

If the match never quite lived up to the expectations, there was still much quality build-up play, even if the final product was missing. Both teams defended well, with David Greene — playing only his third game for Luton in place of the injured Trevor Peake — a capable deputy for the experienced ex-Coventry player.

There were a number of outstanding performances but pride of place must go to David Preece, who seemed to be at the heart of every positive move by Luton; his tackling and distribution were exemplary and 10 years at Kenilworth Road, where he has sampled more ups and downs than most, have not tired him.

The clash between Alvin Martin and Kerry Dixon, two experienced campaigners, was another highlight of a quarter-final tie which neither side deserved to lose. West Ham will be aware that Luton took Newcastle back to Kenilworth Road for a replay in the fourth round and at a ground ready made for Cup upsets the First Division club won 2-0.

Newcastle manager Kevin Keegan wondered after the first

match whether Luton could play any better. They could and in the replay against West Ham tomorrow week they seek to win what would be the 27th Premiership versus Endsleigh League match of this Cup campaign.

Potentially this tie looked the most exciting of all the quarter-finals with both teams having a reputation for playing attacking football. The swirling wind at Upton Park did not help either side and while there was much to admire about the passing of both teams the first half did not really have the number of goal chances that makes for exciting football.

The game started brightly with Trevor Morley having a shot blocked by David Greene, after only 25 seconds. Three minutes later there was another goalkeeper incident though the collision between Juergen Sommer and Morley was not in the Peter Schmeichel-Kim Grant class.

The Luton goalkeeper came out to collect John Dreyer's back header and while Morley may have reached the ball a split second before Sommer no malice was intended as the Luton goalkeeper crashed into the striker.

Eight minutes later the Luton supporters were shouting for referee Brian Hill to produce one of

his cards, preferably the red, when Scott Oakes's progress towards the West Ham penalty area was illegally stopped by Tim Breacker, the former Luton full-back.

It was certainly not serious foul play (a professional foul) and looked a case of Oakes running across Breacker, who clipped the Luton midfielder's heels. Hill correctly awarded a free-kick and left it at that.

Luton were making a number of incisive moves down the left flank with David Preece prominent. The visitors were sending across some curling, testing centres but Ludek Miklosko, West Ham's goalkeeper, was not troubled. West Ham finished the first half the stronger. With eight minutes remaining Ian Bishop's left wing centre was met by Martin Allen, who tried to hit the ball with the outside of his right foot but his effort was wide.

Then, David Burrows' cross was flicked on by Matt Holmes and Mike Marsh's right-foot shot from the edge of the penalty area struck the outside of Sommer's left upright.

The second half followed the pattern of the first with neither team able to impose themselves on the other. Luton found some

good positions, but their final ball into the West Ham penalty area was too often easy pickings for Miklosko which must have frustrated the visiting manager Pleat.

There was a good opportunity for West Ham in the 51st minute when Holmes beat Alan Harper on the edge of the penalty box, but the midfielder's shot went over the bar. As Holmes had a clear shot at goal he would have been upset that he did not at least force a save from Sommer.

There were some curious goal-mouth flurries towards the end of as both teams pushed forward but, despite a number of instances where the ball was bouncing around seemingly waiting to be kicked into the goal, neither team could find the decisive touch.

In the final minute Miklosko had to come racing out of his penalty area to reach the ball before Luton substitute Mark Burke managed to do.

West Ham: Miklosko, Breacker, Martin, Potts, Burrows, Marsh, M Allen, Bishop, Holmes, Chapman (C Allen 83), Morley. **Subs not used:** Kelly (g), Rowland.

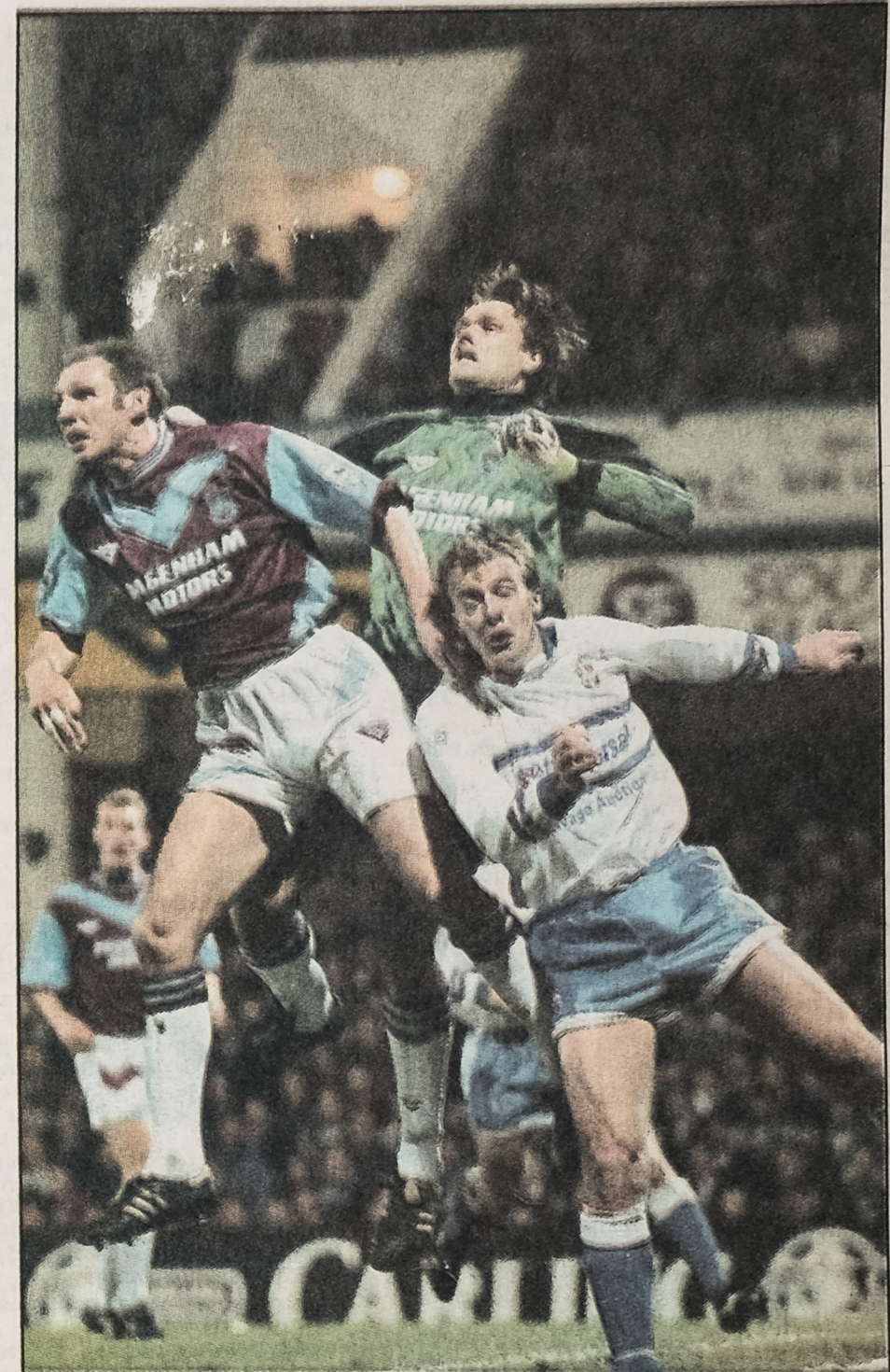
Luton: Sommer, Linton, Greene, Dreyer, James, Telfer, Harper, Oakes (Burke 86), Preece, Hughes, Dixon (Hartson 89). **Sub not used:** Petterson (g). **Booked:** James.

Referee: B Hill (Leicester).

REVISED SEMI-FINAL DRAW

Oldham v Man Utd
Chelsea v West Ham or Luton
(Ties to be played April 9 & 10)

Football — P32



High jump... West Ham goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko and Alvin Martin foil Luton's Kerry Dixon

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