

KEVIN: I'LL BE OUR GERRARD

Hardman says
Hatters have
hit right Trac

By AIDAN MAGEE

TASTY Kevin Nicholls has told Ipswich: You're our starter before Liverpool.

The Luton skipper leads his side at Portman Road today before the main course of the Mighty Reds in next week's FA Cup third round.

Luton were making a meal of their opponents in the Championship until their Boxing Day draw at Derby and a thumping win over Brighton. And the hardman skipper can't wait to get cooking in readiness for Steven Gerrard by giving the Hatters a first away win in three months against the Tractor Boys.

Force

He said: "The Liverpool game will be massive for the club. I'll be up against a player who is lining up for England at the World Cup.

"He is Liverpool's driving force and I'd like to think I do a similar job in midfield at Luton.

"It will be a huge task for us against the European champions - but we can do anything at home.

"Our tempo is good - especially early in games - and the match at

UP AND AT 'EM: Skipper Kevin Nicholls wants Luton to see off Ipswich today as a warm-up to next week's tie with Liverpool

Ipswich is definitely winnable. They are a good footballing team but they have lost a lot of good players like Tommy Miller and Kelvin Davies.

"We've let ourselves down in recent away games. We know a bit of a slump set in. We got back on track by getting a draw late on at Derby and we're having a great Christmas."

The Hatters' run-down Kenilworth Road ground has not changed a bit since the last time they faced Liverpool in the Cup in 1987.

Two goals from Mike Newell (right) dumped Liverpool out of the Cup on a freezing night on their old plastic pitch. And Nicholls added:

"Everyone laughs at the state of Kenilworth Road but other teams don't like playing here.

"We know we need a new stadium. When we go to grounds like Derby and Leicester, it's like playing at Wembley for us.

"The section above the tunnel is always noisy with our punters. Opposition players tell me it's very intimidating."

Boss Newell has told his players to put next week's Cup clash out of their minds.

He said: "Liverpool is a no-lose situation for us. But if we are to remain confident of getting to the play-offs we need to be winning at places like Ipswich."

