

# Weir's lay-off after head injury drama

# GLIMPSE OF A

By JAMES PEARCE

EVERTON skipper David Weir is set to be sidelined for three weeks after suffering concussion in last night's 4-0 thrashing of Luton Town in the Carling Cup at Goodison Park.

The 36-year-old was stretchered off just before half time following an accidental clash of heads with Leon Barnett.

Weir was knocked out by the collision but soon regained consciousness and spent the night in hospital for observation.

Everton assistant boss Alan Irvine revealed: "David is okay now but he's been taken to hospital for all the tests as a precaution.

"We're not expecting any more bad news but with it being a head injury and the fact he was knocked out means it's compulsory he's out for a while and the doctor has told me three weeks.

"The physio came over when David was being stretchered off and said he was okay. He was conscious by then, and he was conscious but still on the stretcher when we came out for the second half.

"It's a blow because it's another player we're missing and we're down to the bare bones at the moment."

Weir's injury was the only

dampener on a great night for the Blues, who booked their place in the last 16 in style.

Irvine added: "We're very pleased. We watched Luton extensively and were concerned about the game because they are a very good side but I thought we were excellent.

"They had a couple of chances but our play at times was fabulous. Our movement and passing was very good and we could have scored many more goals than we got."

Irvine reserved special praise for Simon Davies, who was forced into action at right back and played despite suffering from the virus which has recently swept through the squad.

"Simon was very good. He played on the left of midfield at the weekend and as an emergency right back today. He's shown a real versatility and wasn't fazed about being asked to play there," Irvine said.

"It looked like he had played there many times before and it's all the more remarkable when you bear in mind that he didn't train on Monday.

"He was sent home because he was ill and he didn't eat at all. Tim Howard had the same thing at the weekend and played really well, so I should think all the lads will be wanting that illness now!"

Meanwhile, it was no happy return to Goodison for Luton boss Mike Newell, who admitted his Championship high-flyers were outclassed.

"It's the biggest defeat we've had in a long time. But for our keeper it could have been a lot more," he said.

"There's a gulf in class and it showed to-night."



SUPERSUB: Victor Anichebe enjoys his goal



ACTION MAN: Mark Hughes (above) makes his Goodison debut



HAPPY: Everton players celebrate Luton's own goal

Pics by MARTIN BIRCHALL

LEAGUE Cup ties used to be like this - but not since the days when Luton defenders wore headbands and bubble-perms and Everton strikers sported shorts tighter than Speedo trunks.

Both The Toffees and The Hatters turned back the clock last night to when the League Cup meant something.

They took last night's third round tie seriously, named two full-strength teams, attracted a decent sized gate which created a lively atmosphere - and the reward was a supremely entertaining evening's football.

Four goals, a missed penalty, numerous goal-line clearances, the woodwork rattled and goalkeepers forced into back-breaking saves - all in half-term week when many parents took advantage of the reduced prices to bring the kids.

The only hard part now will be for harassed dads to explain why it isn't like this every week.

There was even a chant from the Gwladys Street of "Kenwright, Ken-

## - but Everton supershow hints at

David Prentice



EVERTON .....	4
LUTON TOWN .....	0

wright gives us a wave!"

Support for an Everton chairman from the home end? It really was that sort of night.

The tone was set the moment the team-sheets dropped.

Sure, Iain Turner made a rare appearance in goal, but otherwise the Blues line-up was packed with familiar, experienced faces.

Joseph Yobo and Phil Neville were the only significant absentees, while the selection of this season's lion rampant, Andy Johnson, showed exactly how seriously David Moyes wanted his squad to take this competition.

Johnson might not have scored, but he still tormented the Hatters' harassed defence all night. And Mikel Arteta's poor 41st minute penalty kick means he will have every chance of boosting his goals tally yet further this season - provided he can beat James Beattie to the ball to future awards.

Johnson had the first on-target shot of the evening in the fourth minute. It was the prelude to both goals being peppered with an array of shots, headers and crosses - created largely as the result of quality, passing football.

Against physically imposing Premiership midfielders, a Cahill-Ar-

teta axis can look lightweight. Against a decent Championship engine room, however, they were mesmerising.

More intelligent, more incisive, more technically accomplished, their football was a joy to watch.

The only surprise was that the opening goal came from a set-piece.

Arteta clipped the ball to the far post, Lescott cleverly headed it back across goal and Cahill produced his party-piece, arriving late to bury a diving header.

We had to wait a full 11 minutes for the next goal - during which time McFadden skipped through on the left and pulled his shot across goal, Feeney hooked Luton's best chance over the bar and Simon Davies showed what he's been desperate to display ever since he arrived at Everton, that when he plays wide on the right he can deliver top quality balls into the box.

# GOLDEN PAST

06/07  
(FLC)



**HOWZAT:** James McFadden admires his strike  
**TOP NOTCH:** Joleon Lescott (below) acknowledges Cahill's opener



**UP AND RUNNING:** Tim Cahill opens the scoring



## even greater moments to come

Three times he obliged in the opening half-hour, all from the alien position of right-back.

But the second goal came from the opposite flank when Johnson accelerated through the gears to leave Foley trailing, before pulling the ball back for a desperate Davis to crash the ball against Keane and into his own net.

The chances continued to pile up. Morgan curved an impressive effort narrowly over Iain Turner's crossbar; Beresford made a flying save to parry Arteta's header; Davies hacked the ball off his own goal-line from Feeney then Keane made the fatal mistake of challenging Johnson inside the penalty area.

A penalty kick was awarded, but after loitering around the penalty spot like a

child waiting to be asked to join in a playground game, spoilsport Arteta claimed the spot-kick responsibility – and fluffed it.

That was four minutes before the interval, time enough for Robinson to slice a clearance into the side-netting, Morgan to bend a free-kick over the wall and onto a goalpost and David Weir to sustain a shocking head injury in an accidental clash of heads.

The second period started just as the first half had ended, with skilful attacking football.

The match-killing goal came in the 52nd minute, Arteta predictably slicing open the Luton defence, Cahill clipping the ball back unselfishly and McFadden stroking into the net.

But even then there was no let-up in the entertainment.

The goal of the night was denied by Beresford's outstretched fingers, snatching the ball off Johnson's toes.

McFadden's header was spectacularly saved by Beresford, Arteta drilled a shot against the post then Feeney's near-post shot was pushed over by Turner.

By this time the hour-mark had just been reached.

Right. Sit down. Pause for breath. Time to go again.

A combination of keeper and covering defender kept out Davies' well controlled shot, Victor Anichebe – eventually allowed on after an over-officious fourth official refused to believe Simon Davies had already

limped off – crashed a fierce drive over, then the engagingly enthusiastic youngster dashed down the left channel and drove a fierce drive under Beresford for the fourth.

The end of the action?

You're joking, surely.

McFadden turned sweetly inside the six yard box, poked the ball past Beresford but saw the ball hacked off the line, then in the 92nd minute Tim Cahill rose at the far post but headed narrowly wide.

It was a treat for an enthralled Goodison – and a reminder of the kind of entertainment the League Cup used to offer when Everton were capable of reaching its latter stages.

The fourth round takes place in a fortnight. We can only hope it's half as good as this match.

**EVERTON:** Turner, Davies (Anichebe 67), Weir (Hughes 45), Stubbs, Lescott, Arteta, Cahill, Arteta, Osman, Johnson (Beattie 67), McFadden. Not used: Vidarsson, Howard.

**LUTON TOWN:** Beresford, Foley, Davis, Bell, Barnett, Edwards, Robinson (O'Leary 79), Keane, Morgan (Brkovic 79), Feeney, Vine (Boyd 79). Not used: Emanuel, Brill.

**REFEREE:** Mr S J Tanner.  
Bookings: Keane (41 mins) foul,  
GOALS: Cahill (22 mins) 1-0, Keane own goal (33) 2-0, McFadden (52) 3-0, Anichebe (77) 4-0.  
ATTENDANCE: 27,149.

### Man of the Match

**MIKEL ARTETA:** Johnson, Davies and Cahill were all bright, but it's hard to look past the mercurial Spaniard who dictated the game at whatever pace he wanted.

