



LUTON TOWN v MILLWALL

12/13 (CAC)

Hatters thrown to the Lions in Cup mismatch

MILLWALL TOO HOT FOR NON-LEAGUERS

It's almost 30 years since an FA Cup tie between these two sides generated as much interest. However it was the horrors of hooliganism which saw a Sixth round tie capture the nation's attention as the London side's fans went on a rampage which eventually led to away fans being banned from Kenilworth Road for five years.

However the ugliness of that night will hopefully be forgotten as the fifth round tie sees the chance of the romance of the cup being highlighted as the home side attempt to be the first non-league side to make the quarter finals of the FA Cup.

Back in that 1985 clash the boot was firmly on the other foot. Luton Town at that time were an established top flight club on the way to the golden period in the clubs history.

The 1-0 victory on the night saw the club reach the semi-finals of the cup, narrowly missing out on a place in the final by going down 2-1 to eventual winners Everton after extra time.

Within the next three seasons they would reach the semi-final's again as well as winning the League Cup with victory over Arsenal in 1988.

Now after financial mismanagement they have fallen all the way to the Conference, but rekindled memories of those 80s cup exploits with their run to the fifth round of this season's competition.

Not content with dumping Wolves out in round three, a result which cost Staal Solbakken his job

BY KARL WHELAN

at Molineux, they became the first non league club to knock out a top flight side since 1989 with a victory over Norwich City in round 4.

Scott Rendell's 80th minute strike at Carrow Road was the headline story in a weekend of shocks, and earned the Hatters a place in the last 16.

However without disrespecting their opponents, the draw for round five was not exactly the reward they will have been looking for.

Millwall are hardly the glamorous opposition that spring to mind when thinking of a money spinning tie.

Their reputation for the uglier side of the game stems from incidents such as that which occurred at Luton 28 years ago, a trait that the club have done some work on trying to eradicate in recent times.

Back then George Graham's Millwall side were on the brink of promotion to the old Second Division and that is where they play their football today, now an established member of the nPower Championship.

Kenny Jackett's team provided the first shock of fourth round weekend themselves when they disposed of Aston Villa, the 2-1 win sealed by John Marquis' late header.

Millwall will enter the tie as strong favourites, but enter the tie in horrendous form. They entered 2013 well placed in the Championship promotion

race, but have failed to pick up a win in the league since beating Bristol City on New Year's Day. That sequence of results includes four straight defeats, the latest of which saw them lose to 2-1 at mangel less Blackpool.

Goals have been hard to come by for the Lions since losing on-loan striker Chris Wood to Leicesters City.

The New Zealand front man remains the clubs top scorer this season with 11 goals and since his departure the only goals in league football have been an Andy Keogh penalty and James Henry's effort direct from a corner against Blackpool.

Luton are also hardly in prime form since the win against Norwich, losing their next two before picking up a draw at home to Forest Green Rovers last time out.

The dismissal of Alex Lawless will see him suspended for the visit of Millwall, a fate which will also befall full back Lathaniel Rowe-Turner who was banned for three games following a sending off against Barrow.

On paper there can only be one winner, but Luton have ripped up the form book in the FA Cup so far this season and will have absolutely nothing to lose when taking on Millwall.

Paul Buckle's side will know that all the pressure is on Kenny Jackett's Lions and can enter the game with the freedom their underdog tag allows them.

For Millwall it's a golden opportunity to move into the last eight of a competition they reached the final of back in 2004.