

Mixed feelings over cup draw

There was a mixed response to the Berks and Bucks Cup semi-final draw among local clubs Maidenhead Utd and Marlow on Saturday.

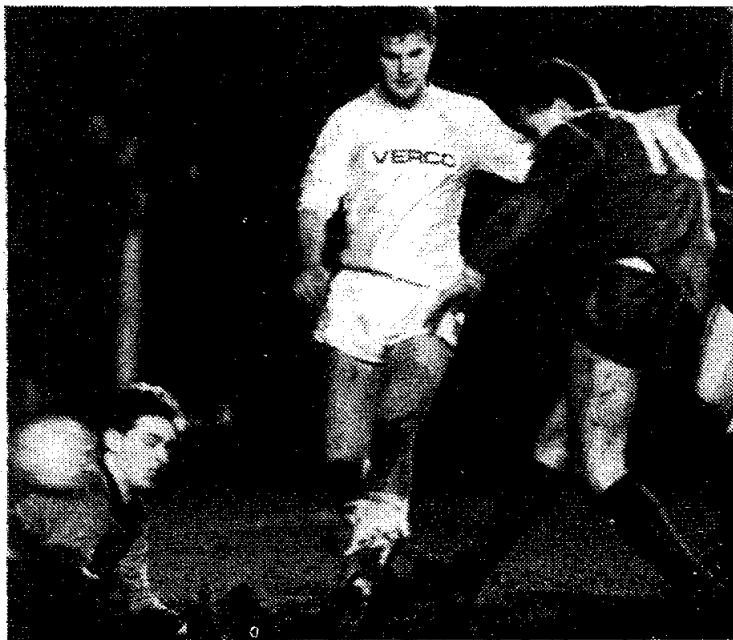
Maidenhead are due to play Windsor at York Rd on a date yet to be arranged, while Marlow have drawn a difficult match away against giant-killers Abingdon, to be played on March 14.

On paper, Windsor are the strongest side left in the cup. They are the holders, and their position in the Vauxhall Opel Premier Division makes them the highest rated league side. Windsor are now out of the FA Trophy, losing 2-0 to Hyde Utd in Monday's third round replay, when a win would have seen them meet Wycombe Wanderers in the quarter finals, so the county cup is their last chance of an honour this season.

However Maidenhead are not daunted by the tie with Windsor. As manager Martyn Spong points out, the Magpies have home advantage, and he stated, "We are quite looking forward to it. We're convinced we could beat them."

Spong was not unhappy at drawing the most powerful of the remaining clubs. He feels that you can disregard league positions as all of the teams left in will be tough to beat — and he feels that includes Maidenhead.

While the Magpies standing in local football is at its lowest ebb, Windsor's star has risen and they have ambitions of achieving a Conference spot, and Division 2 (South) side Maidenhead will be keen to put one over



Goal! Kevin Stone slots home past 'keeper Steve Crompton from point blank range during Marlow's recent win over Wycombe Wanderers in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup.

on their Royal Borough rivals, who include former skipper Michael Barnes, who left United last season in somewhat farcical circumstances.

Maidenhead will be looking to improve on a dismal record in the county cup in recent years — the last time they were in the semi-finals was 1969/70, when they went on to beat Wolverton Town in the final, and as Spong says, "We have nothing to lose."

In contrast, Marlow were less happy at their away draw with Abingdon. Abingdon are in terms of league status the lowest of the four clubs, playing in the Greene King Spartan league, a feeder league for the Vauxhall Opel League. However their ground has become a graveyard for cup hopes in recent years and this season Buckingham Town and Burnham have come to grief at Culham Rd.

Marlow's Berks and Bucks hopes last season

also disappeared at Abingdon, when they beat the Blues 2-1 on an icy December pitch. Manager Mike Keen admitted, "We don't look on it as an easy tie. They are doing quite well at the moment and we shall give them a bit of respect."

With Marlow currently in relegation problems at the bottom of the Premier Division, the chance of cup success comes as a real boost. Their path to the semi included a 5-0 win over local giants Wycombe Wanderers, who fielded what was effectively a week reserve side, and Keen said of that match, "We were very pleased that we played well in front of 1,500 people."

Like Spong, Keen feels all the teams would provide difficult opposition. "It's a one-off game in the cup, and once you get to this stage each team has got as good a chance as any other."