

Colin gets vital touch

AFTER what must have been one of the coldest and longest nights in the history of British football, Hyde's shivering fans tramped home in happy mood.

Traffic chaos on the M62 meant the game did not kick off until 9.03pm and, for long periods it seemed that the match would follow in the fashion of so many others this season.

Having made all the running, created the chances, and twice gone into the lead, the Tigers produced their old trick of allowing their opponents off the hook.

Consequently, as the game entered injury time, fans were probably hoping for a swift end to the match, and a return to the warmth - but they failed to bargain for a surprise ending.

Three minutes into stoppage time, Hyde won a corner on the right, which was headed on by Billy Garton. Mayhem ensued in the Spennymoor goal area and, in the midst of a forest of players, Colin Lambert somehow got a touch to the ball to force it over the line and give his side victory.

For once, the Tigers had turned the tables. Instead of the usual equation, they had snatched victory from the jaws of mediocrity.

With Jason Gallagher making some incisive runs up the right, Hyde had piled on pressure from the start; but, to begin with, it appeared as though the game would produce the usual litany of squandered chances.

In fact, it took 19 minutes before the Tigers moved into the lead. Paul

Hyde United.....3
Spennymoor United.....2

by **MIKE PAVASOVIC**

Snape's shot, following a free kick on the edge of the box, was turned over the bar; and Hyde took advantage of the resulting corner. George Switzer floated it in, and Val Owen converted with a powerful header.

It was going to take something special to stop the Tigers, and it came in the shape of a superb goal, on the stroke of half time. David Robson appeared to be in a safe position, outside the box, but he looked up and smashed a thunderbolt past Jon Scargill.

Fortunately, it soon became clear that Hyde's grip on the game had not been shaken, and they resumed the lead on 69 minutes, with a wonder goal of their own.

Gallagher received the ball in the box, stooped to bring it down and control it, and then - in one flowing movement - stood up to rifle the ball into the roof of the net, past a helpless Terry Hird.

It was a strike worthy of winning any game, but there was still time for Spennymoor to hit back, and they did so with seven minutes left.

Scargill made a good block to stop Craig Veart, but he could not hold the ball, and Gary Cowell picked up the pieces.

Hyde: Scargill 7, Gallagher 9, Switzer 7, Wilson 7, Garton 8, Lambert 7, Kimmins 7, Owen 8, James 7, Snape 7, Nolan 7. Subs: Varden, Henshaw, Brockie.

Spennymoor: Hird, Pepper, Lowes, Robson, Bates, Watson, Raitt, Key, Preen, Innes, Veart. Subs: Cowell for Innes (46), Pearson for Raitt (75), Parnaby.

Referee: Stephen Cooke (Mexborough, Yorkshire)