

# Lightning get set for final knockout blow

**MK LIGHTNING are one match away from the Knockout Cup final.**

Tomorrow they will host Guildford Flames with a three goal advantage following a 6-3 win in the first-leg.

Lightning fans will be desperate to reach the final to add a glimmer of hope to what has been a grim few months.

It was a superb performance from Nick Poole and his side at Guildford, one which they must match if they are to keep the Flames at bay.

Unfortunately, the cup display could not be repeated at the weekend as Lightning slipped to their ninth straight league defeat.

The first clash with Guildford was one of Lightning's best all round performances in weeks with a storming start setting a bench mark in their match.

Gary Clarke netted four minutes in and ten minutes later Ales Perez fired in a power play to give Lightning a two goal advantage.

The Flames pulled one back just before the break with Taras Foremsky striking from Milos Melicherick's assist.

But a brilliant second period allowed Lightning to tighten their grip on proceedings as Clarke and Perez both added to the scoreline and Nick Poole made it 5-1 on the 35th minute.

Guildford were able to narrow the deficit in the final period as Vaclav Zavoral and Neil Liddiard responding to Ross Bowers' early goal for Lightning.

With three goals in their favour Lightning's fate will be in their own



**Ales Perez mixes it in front of the Romford net**

Picture Jez Tibbets

hands tomorrow night and to edge out Guildford they will need to put two poor results against Romford to the back of their minds.

On Saturday Clarke and Matt Towalski had given Lightning a 2-1 advantage but Romford Raiders pulled two back in the final ten minutes to steal the points.

And the same happened at Romford on Sunday, despite Lightning looking favourites to win with a 4-1 lead five minutes from time.

Mikko Skinnari struck twice with Poole and Toni Alasaarela each find-

ing the net to give Lightning what appeared to be an insurmountable lead with just over ten minutes remaining.

But the wheels fell off in spectacular fashion as Romford bagged four goals in five minutes to claim victory from the jaws defeat.

■ LIGHTNING host Guildford tomorrow night, face-off is at 7.45pm. On Saturday Chelmsford come to Planet Ice, face-off at 7pm, before Lightning travel to Bracknell Bees on Sunday, face-off is at 6pm.