

It's a knockout for Lightning

MK Lightning finished their league season with two defeats but now have the Knockout Cup final and play-offs to concentrate on.

Last night Lightning were battling it out in the first leg of the Knockout cup final with Peterborough Phantoms and tomorrow the winner will be decided at Planet Ice.

Lightning will also start their play-off campaign this weekend. They have been drawn in a tough, but winnable group where they will face Slough Jets, Swindon Wildcats and Bracknell Bees.

A mixed record against the English Premier League trio has set up an exciting competition.

Two wins, one in overtime and two defeats to Bracknell in the league this year would hint it is tough to separate the sides, but Lightning do have the

better record in their cup meetings with two victories and one defeat.

Slough Jets, who finished second in the EPL, will be Lightning's toughest opposition. They have won all four of the league meetings this year.

Two of Lightning's losses to the Jets have come in penalty shoot-outs.

And that was exactly how their penultimate league game ended, with a penalty defeat to the Jets.

Steve Moria broke the deadlock on the 21st minute to give the Jets a goal advantage. Ales Parez pulled Lightning back level in the third period, but the scores remained tied and the game went into overtime before going to penalties with Moria netting the winner.

Next day Lightning squandered a two goal lead as they lost 5-3 to Guildford Flames.

Chris McEwen and Toni Alasaarela fired Lightning ahead but Guildford quickly pulled three back to lead at the break.

Another goal eight minutes into the second period stretched Guildford's lead to 4-2 before Matt Towalski grabbed one back.

Lightning almost kept the deficit to two until Guildford stuck again nine seconds from time.

The two defeats ensured Lightning finished sixth in the EPL and were given the tough play-off group.

■ **TOMORROW** Lightning host the second-leg of their Knockout Cup final against Peterborough, face-off is at 7.45pm.

On Saturday they travel to Slough, face-off is at 7.45pm, the return leg is on Sunday, face-off at 6pm.



Ales Parez battles with former Lightning player Steve Moria during Saturday's match with Slough Jets

Picture: Jez Tibbetts