

MATTHEWS MAGIC SHATTERS LUTON

Stoke 2 Luton 0 : by LESLIE DUXBURY

BLINKING was sacrilege. The sight of 48-year-old Stanley Matthews scoring should have stayed with me for ever. It overshadowed Stoke's Second Division championship and their return to the senior League after nine years.

It inspired his team-mates to smother him in a wild salute of joy.

In the 47th minute McIlroy punted a pass to Stan idling happily on his wing.

He collected the ball, made a five-yard burst, and only a lonely Baynham barred his way. He swept to his left and slipped his shot round the lunging 'keeper.

It was Stoke's second goal and virtually the end of Luton. From then on only bad luck and the strangely wet pitch denied Stoke a bigger score.

McIlroy gave the shuffling Matthews every chance he could to stay in the limelight. And Stan responded with more fire and trickery than he has shown for a long time.

Stoke were as taut as a Monday wash-line for the first 20 minutes. Allen nearly kicked an own-goal and Clamp could make only mistakes.

McIlroy, tougher and keener

62/103
than when I last saw him with Burnley, pointed the way to glory.

He contributed a couple of shots and his keenness even earned the gentle genius three whistle blasts for fouls.

Mudie netted No. 1 from a seat in the mud after Baynham tried to smother another McIlroy effort.

Allen, revitalised Clam, Skeels, and Mudie joined McIlroy and Matthews down the one-way street to Luton's goal.

After the early menace of Turner and Jardine Luton were never in the game again.

Their defence battled bravely and at least helped keep the goal tally respectable.

At the end, the pitch became a weaving blanket of red and white scarves and beaming faces.

Matthews had to be rescued by police, and it took captain Eddie Stuart nearly five minutes to reach the tunnel.