

Talbot tames champions Luton

Crewe 2 Luton 1: by RICHARD KEITH

ALTHOUGH Luton lost, it was to a team who have been doing so well that they go up to Division III with them. The jubilant Crewe players went into the stand at the end of the game to acknowledge the cheers of their fans on clinching promotion.

Man who got the biggest cheer of all was centre forward Gary Talbot—the player Crewe couldn't find a place for in the four previous games.

Every home player did his utmost to beat the divisional champions, but none strove more than big Gary to ensure that his side go up.

Luton battled all the way. At one stage it looked as though they were going to keep Crewe in the Fourth Division for at least another year.

But after defender Alan Slough had come to Luton's rescue on two occasions, Crewe succeeded. Five minutes before the interval, Don Ratcliffe slung over a ball from a free kick and Keith Scott headed the ball goalwards.

Glanced

Talbot rose above the rest, arched his neck and the ball glanced off his head, on to a post and into the net.

Three minutes later, the crowd's jubilation was cut short when Ray Whittaker slotted the ball through Crewe's hesitant defence for danger man Bruce Rioch to slam it past goalkeeper Willie Malley.

So Crewe had to struggle all over again. Despite their non-stop effort in the second half, it looked as though Luton, who were defending desperately by now, were going to hold out.

But in the 74th minute, Talbot helped to settle it. From another free kick, this time by Tommy Lowry, the ball ran through to Ratcliffe, who took the ball on before steering it to Talbot.

Talbot went goalwards, but seemed to be hemmed in. Yet he kept the ball, beat off a desperate challenge, and slung it over to winger Kevin McHale, who was standing only four or five yards from goal. McHale snatched his chance to head home the winner.

Then came 16 nail-biting minutes before the final whistle. Talbot went close again and only a last-minute dive by goalkeeper Tony Read stopped the centre forward getting another goal.