

One to stir the memory

MORE THAN 30 years ago Luton Town met Newcastle at Kenilworth Road and came back from three down at half-time to win 4-3. It's still well remembered by thousands who were there. And well past the year 2000 there will be men in Luton who will easily recall Saturday's incredible action replay.

They'll tell their sons and grandsons that the ground buzzed with an unbelievable atmosphere, as a brilliant centre-forward saved the day in the last half-hour with a hat-trick to earn the points that turned out to be the three that ensured promotion.

STORMING FINISH

They might remember being worried stiff as Luton Town, weakened by the absence of two regular players, lost their normal rhythm, yet discovered deep reserves of passion and commitment to beat Newcastle in a storming finish.

One or two old men might even confess that they were so carried away they invaded the pitch at the end to carry Brian Stein off the field like a conquering hero.

He completed the second hat-trick of his Luton Town career with a pair of penalties, which he took because David Moss was out of the side through injury. Ricky Hill's influence from midfield was a far bigger drawback, yet the reorganised team, with a makeshift 4-4-2 formation, triumphed against all the odds.

Failure looked likely when Newcastle, defending well, and inventive on the break, moved into a 2-0 lead in the 57th minute.

Richard Money had been beaten as Peter Cartwright crossed for David Mills to score with a low shot in the 23rd minute, and the

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second goal came when Clive Goodyear tripped Mills. John Trewick scored from the penalty.

Luckily for the Town the visitors decided to change tactics. They tried to stifle the game, with negative defensive tactics and time-wasting so blatant that it brought bookings for goalkeeper Kevin Carr and midfielder Ken Wharton.

Newcastle had been forced to reorganise in the tenth minute when Dave Barton went off injured, but they settled into a useful-looking routine much quicker than the Town did.

Stein and Steve White struggled for a long time, with not enough service and support, in a Town line-up with a four-man midfield—Raddy Antic, Brian Horton, Lil Fuccillo and Wayne Turner.

Newcastle's decision to defend their lead was ill-timed, leaving the Town half an hour to repair the damage. The visitors simply gave up the initiative, and the Town had the power—and the luck—to punish them for it.

Six minutes after Newcastle's second goal Stein put his side back in with a chance after Mal Donaghy and White had given him half an opening. Stein took the ball into the penalty area, around the goalkeeper, and scored with the coolness of a class player.

Town players and supporters realised that the game could be won after all, and the surge of confidence helped to complete Newcastle's misery.

White smashed a shot against the bar, and Antic did the same soon afterwards, but if luck was against them on those occasions, the

referee, Alan Seville, helped to redress matters in a memorable final nine minutes.

In a wild skirmish as Newcastle defended desperately, free kicks might have been given either way, but Mr Seville ruled that Mick Martin, the emergency centre-half, had fouled Horton.

Stein obliged from the spot after Mills had been booked for showing dissent at a decision that looked harsh.

With five minutes to go Stein tried to pull the ball back from the by-line, and Martin, apparently taking action to stop the ball hitting his face, was penalised for hands when the ball hit him.

Stein miraculously kept cool in the cauldron of near-hysteria to hit the winner. His penalties were both struck almost at the centre of the net, with goalkeeper Kevin Carr obligingly diving away from them. It was tough luck on Carr, but justice on a Newcastle side that decided to stop playing football for the last half-hour.

Bad temper crept in, spilling over into a scuffle and fisticuffs in the tunnel at the end between Donaghy and Mills, for which the Newcastle player was later disciplined by his club.

MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Goodyear, Donaghy, Money; Antic, Horton, Fuccillo, Turner; Stein, White. Sub: Bunn, not used.

NEWCASTLE: Carr; Brownlie, Barton (Wharton, 10 mins), Haddock, Saunders; Trewick, Martin, Cartwright; Mills, Varadi, Waddle.

THE GOALS: Mills for Newcastle, 23 mins; Trewick penalty, for Newcastle, 57 mins; Brian Stein hat-trick for the Town, 63 minutes and two penalties, 81 and 85 mins.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town six saved, ten off target and two hit the bar; Newcastle two saved and five wide. Corners: 6-3 to the Town.

REFEREE: Alan Seville, Birmingham.

ATTENDANCE: 13,041.

ENTERTAINMENT: Memorable rousing stuff for the last half-hour. We must be glad to forget the rest because the result and its significance outweighed just about every other feeling for Town supporters.