



THEY'RE UP, UP AND AWAYS!

Glory night as Hatters clinch it

THE players danced in the stand, the supporters roared — and the chairman had his first alcoholic drink for six months.

The celebrations lasted until the early hours of this morning after Luton clinched promotion by beating Shrewsbury 4-1 at Kenilworth Road last night.

First Division football beckoned the Town with open arms. And, after a dodgy spell when they allowed Shrewsbury to equalise, Luton took the game by the scruff of the neck to accept the invitation with gratitude.

There were a few shortened finger nails after an hour when Shrewsbury threatened to blow out the candles on Luton's promotion cake when they equalised.

But once that scare had been erased with Ricky Hill's goal, which put Luton back in front, there was no stopping the Hatters who went on to confirm that Shrewsbury are almost certainly destined for the Third Division.

Suspicion

Nerves showed as Luton fumbled their way through the early stages on the game. Yet Shrewsbury were one of the poorest teams on view at Kenilworth Road this season and the Hatters failed to take advantage of that fact.

Even when Brian Stein put the Town in front after only 14 minutes, there was

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always the horrible suspicion that Shrewsbury were capable of equalising.

When they did, it left the Luton fans wondering whether their team would have to leave the pending promotion party until Wednesday when they continue to chase the championship at Cardiff.

But the fluent football which has kept Luton at the top of the Second Division for 99 per cent of the season finally appeared — and the Town are today in the First Division.

The game was only three minutes old when leftback Paul Johnson got a valuable touch to Stein's cross which prevented Steve White from giving Luton an early lead.

Then, nine minutes later, Stein's swerving shot — hit after he cleverly turned Colin Griffin — was narrowly off target.

But Stein was responsible for the vital breakthrough when he took advantage of Griffin's atrocious back pass to intelligently lob the ball over Bob Wardle's head.

It was an excellent goal.

Special celebrations

STAND-BY next week for a special souvenir pull-out on the Hatters memorable promotion campaign.

It will be packed with features and pictures of a history-making season. Watch out on Tuesday for more details.

But any hopes the Town fans had of an immediate avalanche disappeared as frustration crept into their game.

Lilly Fuccillo shot wide and Stein headed just off target after Wardle dived bravely at White's feet to beat the ball away. Then Stein lobbed the ball towards the target but saw Wardle claw it over the top.

One goal never seemed enough and, when Shrewsbury equalised with a superb volley from Ian Atkins after 60 minutes, it was nothing more than expected.

But Richard Money could have made it 2-1 when Griffin headed his close range effort behind for a corner, although the former Liverpool full back could have been responsible for allowing Shrewsbury to go in front with a bad back pass which Jake Findlay had to dive on.

But, after 77 minutes, all the tension was relieved when Ricky Hill's ferocious shot — from David Moss's corner knocked on by Mal Donaghy — gave Wardle no chance.

Two minutes later, the Town knew they were definitely in the First Division when White ran wide



THAT CHAMPAGNE FEELING! Brian Stein, Lil Fuccillo, Jake Findlay and Raddy Antic soak up the celebrations

on the left before cutting in to squeeze his shot between Wardle's groping fingers and the far post.

Then, with two minutes left, Moss completed the celebrations with an individual effort which finally confirmed the Town's superiority.

LUTON: Findlay, Stephens, Money, Horton, Goodyear, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, White, Fuccillo (Antic), Moss.

SHREWSBURY: Wardle, MacLaren, Johnson (Petts), Turner, Griffin, Keay, Tong, McNally, Atkins, Cross, Bates.

REFEREE: B. Hill (Wellingborough).

ATTENDANCE: 14,563.

GOALS: Stein (14), Hill (77), White (79), Moss (88), Atkins (60).



Not this time . . . goalscorer Brian Stein is denied by Shrewsbury keeper Bob Wardle (out picture)



WE'RE GOING UP! The final whistle goes and Hatters fans start the promotion party on the Kenilworth Road pitch