

UP IN STYLE

A FINAL 15 minutes of sheer domination put an end to the weeks of waiting as Luton earned their ticket to the First Division with an emphatic victory over Shrewsbury on Friday.

"It's a dream come true. It may be a year late, but in that year we have made ourselves better placed to make the most of First Division football," said jubilant Luton boss David Pleat as the champagne corks popped in the Luton dressing room and the Hatters' promotion party began.

"Now we want to win our remaining games and finish top of the league. There's no way we're going to coast home, but that pressure is off us now," he said.

Kenilworth Road had not seen such celebrations for a good few years and it seems only just in the end that Luton should clinch promotion with a convincing 4-1 victory.

The teams were held in a frustrating state of deadlock with a cheeky goal from Brian Stein and a superb equaliser from Ian Atkins.

But in the 76th minute Ricky Hill powered home a first time goal which opened the gates to the First Division. It was a well taken chance

Luton Town 4 Shrewsbury 1

by IAN FLETCHER

after David Moss had crossed the ball for Stein to head down and Hill did the rest in fine style.

Less than two minutes later Steve White took the ball round Colin Griffin and Jackie Keay to slot into the net past the unfortunate Bob Wardle.

And that seemed to be it until David Moss took full advantage of the visitors lack of defensive cover to run the length of the pitch on the left and drive the ball home with only two minutes to go.

That last 15 minutes will overshadow anything that happened in the cat and mouse desperation of the previous 75. But they will be forgotten and Friday will long be remembered as Luton's finest hour as they reached the First Division once more for the first time since 1974/75.

The 14,500 fans who packed Kenilworth Road went home happy and will agree with the words of Ricky Hill whose 76th minute goal was the turning point of the game.

"It's a great experience now it's come. We've been pushing for this for three years and we deserve a moment of celebration."

Luton Town: Findlay, Stephens, Money, Horton, Goodyear, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, White, Fuccillo (Antic 63), Moss.

Shrewsbury Town: Wardle, MacLaren, Johnson (Petts 85), Turner, Griffin, Keay, Tong, McNally, Atkins, Cross, Bates. Referee: Brian Hill (Wellingborough). Attendance: 14,563.



A jubilant Brian Stein is congratulated after opening the scoring



Ricky Hill gets Luton's vital second goal



Homage — a young fan kisses the Kenilworth Road turf