

CANDLES FLICKER ON THE CUP CAKE



SOMEBODY always tries to spoil a party — and 11 somebodies nearly wrecked Luton Town's big day.

Barnsley's gusto came within a puff of snuffing out the candles on the championship cake.

But the greatest climax of the Hatters' season came before the match began.

A golden wave of euphoria swept Kenilworth Road when skipper Brian Horton raised aloft the Second Division trophy.

Manager David Pleat personally chose the stirring theme from the athletics film Chariots of Fire to echo around the ground on his day of glory.

MATCH



FOCUS

81/82
LUTON 1
BARNSLEY 1
by JOHN
RAFFERTY

His team knew they had won the promotion race before they started the lap of honour.

They had the medals and trophy in their hands to prove it and the jubilant crowd sang out: "We are the champions!"

But it all must have seemed a dream when they lined up on a rock hard pitch to take on Yorkshire's Tykes.

A murderous sun beat down on the backs which have carried the awesome pressure of promotion hopes since the first kick of the season.

Cheers turned to groans as the terrier Tykes took control.

Three youths scaled the floodlight pylon in the enclosure to mount a dangerous diversion from the dour struggle on the pitch.

McCarthy and Law were booked in the first half with Barnsley biting swiftly into every tackle in the style of their manager Norman Hunter.

Barnsley had more possession, more urgency and more drive but neither keeper had to make a desperate save.

The game needed a goal and it came four minutes into the second half.

Birch slipped inside Mal Donaghy and cut in from the byeline to make a clear scoring angle on Findlay's goal.

Big Jake rushed out to pull down the little winger and although Riley netted with the ball running loose the referee had already given the penalty.

Birch picked himself up to fire home from the spot low to Findlay's right.

Luton's precision-pass game had suffered from the rough bounce on a parched pitch but they started getting some of the run of the



ball to prise Barnsley apart.

People in the crowd were fainting from the heat. Or was it anxiety?

Steve White had probably the clearest chance with a free kick in the 57th minute but it flew straight into keeper Horn's arms.

Antic came on for Fuccillo with 25 minutes to go and then came another Luton substitution.

Brian Stein changed his boots with 18 precious minutes left.

With just three minutes to go the new footwear did the trick.

Kirk Stephens gritted, grafted and charged into the middle of the park to spear the perfect through ball to Stein.

Stein lashed his shot from the right-hand edge of the box deep into the corner of the net past Horn's dive to drive the fans wild.

The referee had to hold up the restart for fans to clear the pitch.

When the man in black did restart the game he turned down what looked a certain penalty in the last minute with Stein again floored as he turned past a player.

After the match Hunter said he thought Barnsley did enough to win.

David Pleat admitted his men were tired — who wouldn't be? — but nobody minds being tired champions.

● Crowd: 14,463.



● Fans take to the pitch for the last time at home this season.



SECOND DIVISION														
	Home							Away						
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	P	t	
LUTON	42	16	3	2	48	19	9	10	2	38	27	88		
Watford	42	13	6	2	46	16	10	5	6	30	26	80		
Norwich	42	14	3	4	41	19	8	2	11	23	31	71		
Sheff Wed	42	10	8	3	31	23	10	2	9	24	28	70		
QPR	42	15	4	2	40	9	6	2	13	25	34	69		
Barnsley	42	13	4	4	33	14	6	6	9	26	27	67		
Rotherham	42	13	5	3	42	19	7	2	12	24	35	67		
Leicester	41	12	5	4	31	19	6	7	7	25	26	66		
Newcastle	42	14	4	3	30	14	4	4	13	22	36	62		
Blackburn	42	11	4	6	26	15	5	7	9	21	28	59		
Oldham	42	9	9	3	28	23	5	6	10	22	28	59		
Chelsea	42	10	5	6	37	30	5	7	9	23	30	57		
Charlton	42	11	5	5	33	22	2	7	12	17	43	51		
Cambridge Utd	42	11	4	6	31	19	2	5	14	17	34	48		
Crystal Palace	42	9	2	10	25	26	4	7	10	9	19	48		
Derby	42	9	8	4	32	23	3	4	14	21	45	48		
Grimsby	42	5	8	8	29	30	6	5	10	24	35	46		
Shrewsbury	42	10	6	5	26	19	1	7	13	11	38	46		
Bolton	42	10	4	7	28	24	3	3	15	11	37	46		
Cardiff	42	9	2	10	28	32	3	6	12	17	29	44		
Wrexham	42	9	4	8	22	22	2	7	12	18	34	44		
Orient	41	5	8	7	20	24	4	1	16	13	37	36		
(● After Monday, May 17's game)														

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● Ricky Hill leads Luton on a pre-match lap of honour with the Division Two trophy. This was the real climax of Luton's last home game this season.

THE TEAMS

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

BARNSELY: Horn, Law, Chambers, Riley, Banks, McCarthy, Evans, Walker, Aylott, McHale, Birch. Sub: Mann.



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