

HATTERS emerged from embarrassing Arsenal's ailing artists to repel a siege from Villa's artisans on Monday.

Luton showed another facet of their game, rapidly becoming comprehensive enough for the side to challenge for honours next season.

The pressure was dealt with calmly as an early lead was protected with authority.

Steve Foster was solid as a rock and fully proved his point against the club he left under less than happy circumstances.

Behind him Sealey again produced a faultless performance, keeping out five serious threats to his goal.

This disciplined display may well become regarded as the performance that firmly turned the tide in Luton's favour to ensure continued First Division football.

Injury

Ricky Hill was ruled out with the knee tendon injury aggravated in the Arsenal game and Parker took his place, with Turner substitute.

Ironically both the midfielders who performed so well in the cup semi-final at Villa Park, only to fade out of the limelight as cup-tied regulars Nicholas and Preece returned, found themselves involved again.

Villa, who had scored nine goals in their previous two games, had Allan Evans back after suspension.

Graham Turner's men were in no mood to surrender the points despite their mid-table

Tide turns for Hatters

anonymity and McMahon produced an aggressive midfield performance.

First Harford and McMahon were lectured after squaring up to each other. McMahon then chose other partners for his forays, clattering Donaghy and then being booked with

enough for Stein to strike and whip the ball low past keeper Poole.

Luton's defence was keeping a tight rein on the Villa strikers. In fact, most of the early play-making came from talented full-back Dorigo and the chances that tested Sealey fell to him, the other full-back Williams and McMahon.

Only once did Peter Withe have a clear-cut chance and the Luton keeper save brilliantly.

Luton could have poached a second goal late in the game when Parker showed fine skills to put the ball in the net.

Disallowed

The effort was disallowed because Stein was in an offside position although it was difficult to understand how he was supposed to have been interfering with play.

Villa appealed enthusiastically for two penalties, once when Evans went down under challenge from Harford and later for an alleged handball against Parker.

**A. VILLA 0
LUTON 1**

**By GRAHAM
PUNTER**

84/85

a late tackle on Breacker from which the young full-back was lucky to walk away.

Foster was unfortunate to be booked when he tangled with McMahon and certainly the incident never smacked of retribution.

Hatters won because they took all Villa had to offer and struck on the break.

Cowans gifted the goal after 21 minutes. He appeared to have rescued his defence when he intercepted a cross from Breacker but mis-controlled long



● **THE WINNER . . . Cowans slips and Brian Stein scores Luton's vital Villa Park goal.**

They perhaps deserved a point out of the game but Luton had at least a moral right to a victory on the Villa Park pitch.

VILLA: Poole, Williams, Glover, Evans, Dorigo, Birch, Mc-

Mahon, Cowans, Walter, Withe, Gibson. Sub Daley.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas, Parker, Nicholas, Preece, Stein, Harford, Nwajiobi. Sub: Turner.