

END OF



● Mick Harford leaps above Forest defender Brian Laws to put the Hatters ahead.



● Ricky Hill rounds Steve Sutton but put his final shot agonisingly wide.

Hatters' heartbreak as Sealey's blunder sparks Forest fire

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(CLC)

A MOMENT of madness from goalkeeper Les Sealey ended Luton's Littlewoods Cup reign at Wembley on Sunday.

For nearly an hour the Hatters side had belied their lowly league position and dismal recent form to control the game and take a deserved lead through Mick Harford.

But just nine minutes into the second half Sealey charged from his line to bring down Steve Hodge and Nigel Clough equalised from the penalty spot.

Rocked by Sealey's blunder Luton crumbled and Forest clinched their first trophy in nine years with goals from Neil Webb and a second from man-of-the-match Clough.

It was a shattering ending for manager Ray Harford who had watched his side dominate the first-half with midfielders David Preece and Danny Wilson outshining their more illustrious opposite numbers Hodge and Webb.

Booked

But Preece was booked on the stroke of half-time for a deliberate trip on Webb and with the threat of a sending-off hanging over him he faded from the game as Brian Clough's side stepped up a gear.

It had all started so brightly for the Hatters who nearly took the lead after just 14 minutes when Ashley Grimes' thumping shot was turned over the

Luton Town	1
Harford	
Forest	3
Clough 2 (1 pen), Webb	

bar at full-stretch by Forest keeper Steve Sutton.

Six minutes later Forest thought they had taken the lead when Lee Chapman turned a mishit Clough shot past Sealey but the effort was ruled out for offside.

Sealey was then forced to make a scrambled save from a Webb shot but the Hatters were desperately unlucky not to score in the 27th minute.

Kingsley Black ended a jinking run with a superb through ball inside Terry Wilson, but Ricky Hill was forced wide by Sutton and put his effort behind from an acute angle.

Classic

But nine minutes later Luton finally got the goal they deserved with a classic piece of finishing from Mick Harford.

The Hatters striker, who was superb on the day, stole in behind four Forest defenders to power Danny Wilson's right-wing cross past Steve Sutton.

The hapless keeper managed to get both hands to the ball but was powerless to prevent Harford's header speeding into the net.

Two bookings in the last six minutes of the half marred an otherwise sporting affair with Forest's Chapman having his name taken following a goalmouth scramble which ended with Sealey having to be restrained by Webb and Preece finally running out of luck after a series of crunching tackles.

As expected Forest came out breathing fire at the start of the second-half and Tommy Gaynor gave notice of the danger to come when his centre flashed across the face of the goal without anybody applying the vital touch.

But the Hatters missed a chance to wrap the game up in the 49th minute with Laws clearing Harford's shot off the line after a fine through ball from Wilson.

A minute later Chapman shot narrowly over from the edge of the box, but Forest finally drew level in the 54th minute courtesy of Sealey's rush of blood.

A penalty always looked likely as soon as the Luton keeper rushed from his line and Hodge made him pay in full by touching Webb's through ball past him before tumbling delightedly over.

Hapless

This was the signal for Nigel Clough to take centre-stage and he rewarded the Forest faithful with a spot-kick that sent the hapless Sealey the wrong way.

With all their good work undone the Hatters visibly wilted and it was no surprise when Forest took the lead in the 69th minute.

Ashley Grimes had become increasingly troubled by Gaynor and the Hatters full-back was nowhere to be seen as the Forest winger, a replacement for the injured Franz Carr, broke down the right.

Turning point

FOREST scorer Neil Webb said the penalty was the turning point of the game, writes Simon Oxley.

"Getting back on level terms spread confidence throughout the team," he said. "And it gave us the belief we could win."

"We showed a lot of character, and I believe the side can go onto better things."

Luton players felt Webb was offside as he put Forest in the lead, but the England midfielder said he even look at the linesman.

After Hatters' fightback against Arsenal, Forest determined not to relax in the final 10 minutes.

But Webb admitted: "I was more nervous before the 10 minutes to go than I was when we were down."