

■ Mitchell Thomas on the attack against Macclesfield



■ Stuart Douglas sees a first half effort go inches wide against Macclesfield, while pictured below are members of the 1959 cup final side



Old boy sinks Hatters

98/99

TWO goals in ten minutes secured a well deserved victory for Macclesfield.

Luton denied them with an injury time equaliser at the Moss Rose in December, and Gary Doherty's 88th minute goal gave them the chance to do it again.

But with virtually the last kick of the game, Tony Thorpe scuffed his shot from right in front of goal and Macclesfield survived.

Fate usually has a habit of bringing rain to celebration parades, and the Hatters were certainly ripe for a reversal yesterday.

Before the game the Luton youth team were presented with the league championship trophy and their medals, and the 10 surviving members of the 1959 cup final side were introduced to an appreciative crowd at half-time, 40 years on.

By then the club they graced all that time ago were two goals down to the basement outfit, the winner proving to be a splendid solo goal from their

**Luton Town 1
Macclesfield Town 2**

By BILL COLE

enigmatic old boy Simon Davies, who was released on a free transfer just before Christmas.

In the second half, Macclesfield shut up shop and the young Town side lacked the will to break them down until that Doherty strike in an exciting last five minutes.

What made defeat worse was that they started up front like world beaters. Twice Stuart Douglas failed to control the ball when in good positions inside the first five minutes.

But the gold-edged chance fell to Thorpe moments later. A quickly taken free-kick by Matthew Spring fell beautifully into Thorpe's stride, having taken the defence completely by surprise.

The crowd were already on their feet to salute the score when the ball hit the advertising hoardings behind the

goal having been fired wide.

Then Macclesfield keeper Ryan Price took a hand in proceedings. He produced a magnificent save to turn round Spring's shot after a clever one-two with Thorpe and from the corner Ray McKinnon was fractionally wide with a volley.

Then Thorpe had Price diving at full stretch to punch away his low swerving free-kick from just outside the penalty area after Thorpe himself had been upended going through.

It was then McKinnon's turn to bring the best out of a diving Price, but Chris Willmott did manage to beat him. His far-post header however was knocked off the line by Hitchen, with Douglas closing in.

After looking like they could wrap the game up at will, Luton went behind to a couple of soft goals. The defence had looked vulnerable earlier when Kelvin Davis made a mad rush out of his goal, missed the ball and was rescued by Alan White. He calmly cleared when another Luton old boy Graeme Tomlinson shot into the keeper's left net.

Tomlinson then only had Davis to

beat from close range but tapped his shot weakly into the keeper's arms.

On 25 minutes from Macclesfield's first corner of the game, the Town defence made a couple of dreadful efforts to clear, only for the ball to run to Neil Sorvel who tucked it neatly past Davis from close to the penalty spot.

Spring was lucky only to be booked for a terrible tackle on Hitchen that led to a return to the Kenilworth Road turf for Davies when Hitchen could not resume.

There were just 35 minutes on the clock when Davies was able to joyously celebrate what turned out to be the winning goal. Kelvin Davis showed no interest in an aimless Macclesfield cross into his penalty area with no blue shirt in sight.

He left it all to Stuart Fraser, who made a hash of it. Keiron Durkan fed Davies to dribble past a couple of Town defenders before planting a shot in the net.

It showed that the Welshman had the skill that Lennie Lawrence paid £200,000 for.

It's a pity he didn't show it while he

was employed by Luton.

After a half-time parade of messrs Baynham, Bingham, Brown, Cummins, Gregory, Groves, Hawkes, McNally, Morton, and Pacey across the pitch to the acclaim of the present-day Town fans, we had to wait until the last five minutes before some more worthwhile action.

Gary Doherty had certainly injected some life into the Town attack after coming on as a substitute and he rammed home an amazing cross from Spring. The Town midfielder looked completely hemmed in by the corner flag with time running out when he produced a lovely, dangerous low cross from out of the blue that Doherty duly converted from close range.

Thorpe could have made it count with seconds to play. He did not, but it would have been far too cruel on the visitors if he had.

Luton Davis, Willmott, Thomas, Spring, White, Johnson, Thorpe, McKinnon (Doherty 56), Douglas (Fotiadis 56), McKindoe, Fraser (George 71).

Attendance 5,738.