



STAR TURN: Heikkinen

MARKUS IS ROCKING TO THE FINNISH

Luton Town 1 Ipswich 0

By AIDAN MAGEE

HEAD BANGER Markus Heikkinen is ready to rock his way into the Premiership.

The Finnish defender loves getting his shoes dirty by going to Smashing Pumpkins gigs in London with his mates.

He played out of position in Luton's mid-field as Steve Howard's late winner gave the Hatters victory in this meaningless game.

Heikkinen, 27, is a candidate for Player of the Year as Luton have established themselves in the Championship.

And he reckons his love of heavy rock – which he uses to psyche him up for games – has set the tone for his season.

He said: "I'm into so many different bands, and I'm a big Smashing Pumpkins fan. One of the good things about playing for Luton is that you're close to London.

"Whenever I have a day off there is always something to do. I tend to go to gigs with a few mates, and my brother, who lives in London.

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"I don't play any instruments, and I don't sing – I wish I could! In Finland this kind of music is much more popular.

"In England people seem to be into hip hop and dance music. I listen to music all the time, and I use it to pump me up.

"But I only really listen to it through my headphones because the other boys don't like it. They listen to different stuff.

"The new position is not a new thing for me. I played there for two seasons before I came here, but I've played every game for Luton at centre-half.

"We are not too far away from the play-offs. With a couple of signings we could get promotion."

Ipswich keeper Shane Supple, 18, pulled off three brilliant first half saves to confirm his reputation as one of the hottest young stoppers outside the Premiership.

Tractor Boys boss Joe Royle thinks he is the man to take over long-term from Shay Given in goal for the Republic of Ireland.

Supple said: "Overall I'm delighted with the way it's going personally. I broke in around Christmas time, and have held the position ever since. I didn't think getting into the first team was going to happen this early for me."