

 **LUTON TOWN 3** 13/4
Gutridge 20, Gray 52, Benson 86
ALFRETON TOWN 0

THE HATTERS ARE MADE OF STERNER STUFF NOW

Title chase is well on course


By STUART HAMMONDS

VERDICT: Luton took another step towards promotion, while Alfreton can now concentrate on a dozen games in which they can seal a play-off place and a shot at joining them

A STODGY surface, a stubborn set of part-time opponents and an expectant Kenilworth Road crowd kept quiet for much of the opening quarter.

It is on afternoons like this that Luton Town have occupied to beat themselves in their five seasons as a Non-League club. Ebbsfleet, AFC Telford and Dartford anyone?

No more. The likes of Alfreton Town, for all their spirit, organisation, threat on the break and, yes, tendency to slow the game down to suit themselves, will not be added to the list.

John Still has seen to that in his year and four days at the helm, and as a Conference title winner twice previously, the veteran manager knows that it is on grind-it-out afternoons like this that championships are secured.

This "reinvested" version of the Hatters, as the manager referred to them following the 6-0 midweek mauling of Wrexham, will surely go on to secure an automatic return to League Two.

Their near 8,500-strong backing sang "We're on our way back, f*** the FA, we're on our way back". And they are. It is just a question of when.



MATCH STATS
LUTON v ALBERTON

10	SHOTS ON TARGET	3
4	SHOTS OFF TARGET	4
5	CORNERS	4
1	OFFSIDE	2
14	FOULS CONCEDED	12
0	YELLOW CARDS	2
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Scott Griffiths (Luton)
ATE: 8.412

ENTERTAINMENT: ***
 RFE RATING: Under Review 6/10

LUTON: 14-5-35: Tyler 7, Henry 7, McNulty 7, Franks 7, Griffin 6, Manning 7, McGeehan 6.

Still won the 2006/07 title with five games to spare, his beloved Dagenham & Redbridge having first usurped long-time leaders Oxford United on the Saturday between Christmas and New

This time it was the other half of the Boat Race that was overtaken on December 28 with the 6-0 thrashing of Kidderminster Harriers.

7 Subs not used.
n, Meadows.

Leke Guttridge, Andre Gray and Paul Benson each scored for the third game in a row to make it 20 goals for and none conceded in the last four as Luton recorded

ers, and the form Town are currently in, it could be even 13th successive home league win and 25th Skrilk Premier game unbeaten in total.

earlier this time - although Cambridge's 5-1 win over the same opposition showed they haven't sunk

"That's because a team came here initially not to get beat - and I haven't got any problems with that - but we found the answers."

albeit having played a game more than the U.S., and Still added: "The team's been doing terrific, but there is one goal and that is the time to celebrate, when we achieve the goal."

Alfreton had the first two shots on goal in a poor first half, both through Daniel Bradley, but Luton broke through with their first attempt just before the half-hour.

when he finally did by pulling onto left-back Connor Franklin, he capitalised on a poor clearance to fire home at the second attempt.

After the break, Fraser Frank's header was hacked off the line before man-of-the-match Scott Griffiths, up from left back and - according to Stoll showing "what an outstanding player he is" - capitalised on hesitancy by Alfreton's debutant right back Andra Jones.

Gray to tap in his 25th goal of the season. All have come in his last 21 starts, with 11 in his last six.

Berson soon wrapped things up though with his 15th of the campaign, when Alfreton keeper Jon Worsnop's clearance smacked against his own defender and late

loanee to finish.

"We've been the architects of our own downfall. We've comfortably held a club that are boys' own and confident, but we've made three individual mistakes and



SEALING IT: Paul Benson beats Jon Worsnop to net Luton's third Inset top: Luke Guttridge is carried off Inset bottom: Andre Gray goes close

Peterson
Coush Own