



LEAGUE TWO

LUTON TOWN 3

Benson 19, Whalley 59, 63

MANSFIELD TOWN 0

Att: 8,418 Rating: ★★★ Ref: Gavin Ward 6/10

14/15

WHALLEY SET FOR STARDOM

By Mike Simmonds

FLYING winger Shaun Whalley could finally be about to realise his undoubted potential at Luton Town, according to manager John Still.

The 27-year-old scored a magnificent quickfire double during a comfortable win over Mansfield, his first goals of the season.

And Still believes this is just the tip of the iceberg for his star turn.

"He just wants to play football," Still said. "As he's got older, he's realised he's got a talent and if he really takes it seriously, he could push on and fulfil the potential that he obviously had as a young man."

"He came in here, started and it never went particularly well and the team went on an unbelievable run and no matter what he did, he couldn't get in the team."

"But it's been a really pleasing experience that he's playing and playing as well as he is playing at the moment."

Luton, who went into the game on the back of their first defeat in 11 league games after losing to Burton last weekend, went close early on as Nathan Doyle tested Sascha Studer from 25 yards.

The Hatters did have the lead, however, on 19 minutes as Paul Benson netted at the second attempt after he had originally been denied by Studer – the striker's first league goal of the campaign.

Town's top scorer Mark Cullen was then denied by a superb challenge from Kieron Freeman as he went to turn in Whalley's accurate cross, while Benson had to be stretchered off after 27 minutes, injuring himself making an innocuous challenge.

Luton almost had a second as Andy Drury scooped narrowly wide, before Whalley's fierce drive was deflected behind and, from the corner, Stags defender Lee Beevers headed Fraser Franks' attempt off the line.

In the second half, Reggie Lambe's spectacular overhead effort flew narrowly over, while Luton striker Cullen headed against the bar from Michael Har-

STAR MAN
SHAUN WHALLEY
Luton Town



OPENER: Paul Benson scores for Luton
Inset: Shaun Whalley celebrates his second

PICTURES: Gareth Owen

riman's pinpoint delivery. However, Luton made the game safe through Whalley on 59 and 63 minutes.

First, he saw his cross-shot fly into the far corner and then set off on a mazy run to send a magnificent daisycutter past Studer and into the net.

The Stags, who had been briefly perked up by the introduction of deadline day loan signing Junior Brown, who tested Mark Tyler once, didn't really threaten

after Whalley's double, slipping to a first defeat of caretaker boss Adam Murray's reign.

Murray said: "I'm disappointed we've lost. I think in key moments of the game we've seen why Luton are where they are, and we are where we are the minute."

"The first and second goal we gave them, the third goal, we're chasing to get one and always have a chance of getting countered."

"Let's not get this wrong though,

this is a side that have been together two and half years, function like a machine and we've gone from black to white in the space of five days.

"So for me, we have to give these boys credit."

LUTON: (4-4-2): Tyler 7, Harriman 7, McNulty 8, Franks 8, Griffiths 7, Whalley 8 (Rooney 86 N/A), Smith 8, Doyle 8, Drury 7, Cullen 7 (Walker 82 6), Benson 7 (Howells 27 6) **Subs not used:** Lacey, Justham, Ruddock Mpanzu, Miller
MANSFIELD: (4-5-1): Studer 4, Freeman 6, Tafazolli 6, Riley 6, Beevers 6, Lambe 6 (Rhead 76 6), Heslop 6, Sendles-White 5 (Bell 61 5), Clements 5, Taylor 5 (Brown 46 6), Oliver 6
Subs not used: Bingham, Palmer, Marsden, Evltimov