



HAT-TRICK: Chris Martin, Claude Gnaka and Tom Craddock

Battling Luton prove a point

LUTON TOWN turned a trophy triumph into a mass protest and a statement of defiance yesterday.

They are fighting to stay in the Football League after starting the campaign with an unprecedented 30-point deduction and spending eight months at the bottom of the table.

So the 40,000 fans who trekked down the M1 to watch their team win the Johnstone's Paint Trophy at Wembley ritually abused Football League chairman Lord Mawhinney.

And Nick Owen, the TV presenter who is Luton's chairman, said: "This win says to the FA, the League and all the football authorities that this club will not die."

Hatters manager Mick Harford said: "Lord Mawhinney will not be invited to our celebration, but I thought our fans showed what they think in the proper manner."

"We have had it tough and without the consortium who saved the club and worked so hard, the club would be dead."

"Now, hopefully, this is the start of a new era for the club."

Luton dropped into the Football League's bottom division in May after having 10 points deducted for going into administration. Then, they were docked 10 points by the Football Association for irregularities in payments to agents.

Next, the League docked another 20 points for breaking the rules in the way they came out of administration. Mawhinney admitted last week that the League had not known about the FA punishment when they set their additional penalty.

So, when His Lordship was introduced to the teams before kick-off, the packed Luton end of the stadium erupted with hatred.

And when the big screens showed Mawhinney there was another explosion of enmity. As the sponsors' representative presented the



MICK DENNIS

reports

LUTON	3
SCUNTHORPE	2

(AET: 2-2 after 90 minutes)

Trophy, the cameras avoided Mawhinney. Other screens missed the moment as well.

The match was televised by Sky Sports One, but when it went to extra-time, that channel switched to the build-up between Manchester United and Aston Villa. This game was moved to Sky Sports Extra.

There was controversy about one of Luton's goals.

Tom Craddock should have been sent off for cuffing Cliff Byrne around the ear just before half-time, but none of the officials saw the incident, Craddock going on to put Luton 2-1 ahead after 69 minutes.

Scunthorpe took the lead with Gary Hooper's 30th goal of the season before Chris Martin, on loan from Norwich, collected a smartly taken equaliser.

Craddock's goal was followed by a splendid strike from Scunthorpe's Grant McCann three minutes before time.

But Luton won when substitute Claude Gnaka outwitted keeper Joe Murphy with a lob.

Scunthorpe manager Nigel Adkins said: "We can come back to Wembley for the play-off final."

Harford has a more immediate appointment - with a barber. He said: "I promised I'd have my head shaved if we won. The boys might have to hold me down, but I'll get it done."

LUTON (4-3-1-2): Brill; Spillane, Asafu-Adjaye, Pilkington, Emanuel; Jarvis (Parkin 11.7), Nicholls, Keane; Hall; Martin, Craddock (Gnaka 85). **Booked:** Nicholls, Martin. **Goals:** Martin 32, Craddock 70, Gnaka 95.

SCUNTHORPE (4-4-2): Murphy; Byrne, Pearce (Wright 85), Mirfin, Williams; Lansbury, Sparrow (Woolford 77), McCann, Hurst (Togwell 63); Hooper, Hayes. **Booked:** Wright. **Goals:** Hooper 14, McCann 87.

Referee: P Crossley (Kent).



Silver seal: Kevin Nicholls kisses the trophy with Tom Craddock

Defiant Luton in final protest

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY

LUTON TOWN	3
Martin 32, Craddock 70, Gnaka 95	
SCUNTHORPE UNITED	2
Hooper 14, McCann 88	
aet, 2-2 at 90min	Att: 55,378

By David McVay

ON their first trip to Wembley, Luton Town were honoured by the presence of Field Marshal Montgomery, an echo of a not-too-distant global conflict that gave birth to Winston Churchill's famous 'V' for victory gesture.

Fifty years on from that FA Cup defeat to Nottingham Forest and stoic defiance was evident once more on their latest visit to the national stadium, in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy final yesterday.

Bottom of League Two by virtue of 30 penalty points deducted by the game's governing hierarchy, Luton beat Scunthorpe United to secure the Football League's showcase silverware in a hugely absorbing contest that was decided by substitute Claude Gnaka's winner in the fifth minute of extra time.

Had Luton's overwhelmingly superior support, more than 40,000 Hatters fans filling one half of the ground, been able to muster themselves into the shape of two fingers, doubtless the symbolism would have been directed squarely at the dignitaries in the Royal Box. And not in a nice way.

Instead, they unfurled flags

of St George announcing "Thanks 4 Sweet FA" and booed every time mention was made of the watching Lord Mawhinney, the League chairman.

"They [the fans] were fantastic and their protests were in a fitting manner," said Luton manager Mick Harford.

Scunthorpe, striving to reclaim their Championship berth, deserved the early lead that arrived when Gary Hooper plundered his 30th goal of the season. Chris Martin levelled before half time and when Tom Craddock's 70th-minute finish nudged Luton in front their revival seemed complete.

Grant McCann's superb left-foot effort, arrowed into the top corner with two minutes remaining, carried the game into extra time where Marcus Williams' indecision was exposed by Gnaka's pace as the Frenchman lobbed a stranded Joe Murphy.

Shorn of points by the ruling bodies, Harford will be shorn of most of his hair this week after a pre-match promise to have his head shaved by his players in the event of victory. By the time it grows back, Luton's third successive relegation may well be confirmed. In which case, will the holders be invited back to defend their trophy?

Luton Town (4-3-3): Brill; Spillane, Asafu-Adjaye, Pilkington, Emanuel; Nicholls, Hall, Keane; Jarvis (Parkin 11.8), Craddock (Gnaka 85), Martin. **Subs:** Button (g), Davis, Roper. **Booked:** Nicholls, Martin. **Scunthorpe United (4-4-2):** Murphy; Byrne, Pearce (Wright 85), Mirfin, Williams; Lansbury, Sparrow (Woolford 77), McCann, Hurst (Togwell 64); Hooper, Hayes. **Subs:** Lillis (g), May. **Referee:** P Crossley (Kent).

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT FINAL

It's been emulsional

MICK'S JOY IN CRISIS SEASON



LUTON 3 SCUNTHORPE 2



AET
90 MINS
2-2

PAUL JIGGINS at Wembley

LUTON boss Mick Harford expected a close shave on and off the pitch — and ended up with neither.

The Hatters may be heading out of the Football League but were good value for their shock triumph.

And their jubilant manager had another result in the dressing room afterwards when a faulty pair of hair clippers meant he was unable to keep his promise to his squad to let this victory go to his head.

The former hardman explained: "Our winger Rossi

Jarvis had his head shaved in the hotel on Saturday.

"I said if we won I'd have mine done too — and unfortunately somebody heard me.

"But the clippers weren't working in the dressing room afterwards so I've got away with it for it now. The players are saying they will do it this week but they'll have to hold me down.

"And I wouldn't want to be the first one of them to try."

Nor would I.

Luton's thrilling victory evoked memories of when Harford, as a

player, helped the Hatters beat Arsenal 3-2 in the 1988 League Cup final at the old Wembley.

Back then the Bedfordshire club were a top-flight club.

Now they are bottom of the league and heading for the Blue Square Premier.

The 40,000 Luton fans who travelled to Wembley booed Football League chairman Brian Mawhinney as he was presented to the teams before kick-off.

That was in protest at the club's 30-point deduction for "financial irregularities" at the start of the season. But rumoured protests by players never materialised.

League One play-off chasers Scunny were expected to coast to victory and an upset did not look on the cards when leading scorer Gary Hooper fired them in front in the 14th minute with his 30th goal of the season.

Hatters skipper Kevin Nicholls was then nearly decapitated when he dived to head clear a thunderbolt from Iron's on-loan Arsenal kid Henri Lansbury.

Standards

Chris Martin levelled for Luton in the 32nd minute when he chested down Tom Craddock's pass and slammed his shot past Joe Murphy.

Craddock drilled Luton 2-1 ahead in the 70th minute but was lucky to still be on the pitch after TV cameras caught him rabbit punching Iron skipper Cliff Byrne in a bust-up on the stroke of half-time.

But it looked like the striker was going to be the match-winner until Grant McCann took the game into extra-time with a curling shot from 20 yards in the 88th minute.

Luton rallied and sub Claude Gnakpa took advantage of some hesitancy by Marcus Williams to lob the ball over the advancing Murphy for the winner.

Scunny boss Nigel Adkins said: "The turning point was when Lansbury's shot was headed off the line by Nicholls. That seemed to galvanise them.

"The lads are very disappointed — it's not a very nice feeling. I have told them to bottle this experience and learn from it, so that when we come back here for the play-off final we can win it."

SUN STAR MAN

KEVIN NICHOLLS (Luton). Here, there and everywhere.

JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY JOHNSTONE'S



MARTIN... equaliser

GLOSS FINISH... Mick Harford celebrates with the trophy

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LUTON TOWN 3 SCUNTHORPE 2 (AET)

LUTON: Brill, Asafu-Adjaye, Keane, Pilkington, Emanuel, Martin, Jarvis (Parkin 118), Spillane, Nicholls, Hall, Craddock (Gnapka 85). **Goal:** Martin 32, Craddock 70, Gnapka 95
SCUNTHORPE: Murphy, Byrne, Mirfin, Pearce (Wright 85), Williams, Sparrow (Woolford 77), McCann, Lansbury, Hurst (Togwell 64), Hayes, Hooper. **Goal:** Hooper 14, McCann 88.
REFEREE: Phil Crossley **ATTENDANCE:** 24,818



Luton boss Mick Harford is the talk of the town after guiding his side to the Johnstone's Paint Trophy

TOP HATTERS

Claude's Wembley prize for doomed Luton

BY MIKE WALTERS
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FRENCHMAN Claude Gnapka scored Luton's Wembley winner which will bring them sunshine in the Blue Square Premier next season.

Substitute Gnapka's extra-time lob will not bring back the 30 points the Hatters were docked by the Football League and the FA last August. And barring a miracle, it will not save Luton from becoming the first club to win a Wembley final and be relegated out of the

League in the same season. But approaching the 25th anniversary of Hatters fan Eric Morecambe's death, the Johnstone's Paint Trophy will be a source of comfort to them as much as League chairman Lord Mawhinney's embarrassment at having to present it. Cheered on by England cricketer Monty Panesar and Kenilworth Road godfather David Pleat, Luton shaded one of the best Wembley finals of any era. In truth one of their heroes, striker Tom Craddock, should not have been on the pitch when he fired them 2-1 ahead. Had any of the officials spotted his off-the-ball cuff on Cliff Byrne in the first half, he would

surely have been sent off. But it would be churlish to deny Luton a consolation prize on their way through the trapdoor. Manager Mick Harford was among the team who beat Arsenal to lift the League Cup 21 years ago. Harford promised his players he would shave his head if his side won, but he warned: "They will have to pin me down first, and I wouldn't like to be the first one who tries!" "This could be a turning point in the history of Luton Town. Down on the touchline when I look back in a few years, it will probably top winning here as a

▶ **CLAUDE NINE Gnapka is mobbed**

player. The players, directors and staff are going to have a celebration tonight - but Lord Mawhinney won't be invited." Chairman Nick Owen, the TV presenter whose consortium



saved the club from extinction last summer, claimed Luton's triumph sent out a powerful message. He said: "It tells the Football League, the FA and all the football authorities: This team will not die." It was Scunney side up when Gary Hooper's 30th goal of the season fired Iron in front on 14 minutes. But Luton, physically stronger and more robust in the tackle, deserved to be level by the break. Chris Martin supplied the equaliser, chesting down Craddock's left-wing cross to steer his shot

expertly beyond Joe Murphy before Craddock drilled Luton in front with 20 minutes left. Just when Scunthorpe appeared to have run out of ideas, Grant McCann curled an exquisite 25-yard shot into the top corner. But it took Gnapka, who grew up in Marseille with posters of Chris Waddle on his bedroom wall, just five minutes of extra time to purge the Hatters' disappointment. Iron manager Nigel Adkins gathered his distraught players in a huddle on the pitch afterwards and told them to "bottle the experience", adding: "Let's see if we can come back to Wembley for the play-off final and win it."

**WEMBLEY
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GUTTED



WEMBLEY, they say, is no place for losers – and this young fan shows the pain felt by 13,000 Iron supporters after their team's 3-2 cup final defeat to Luton Town.

Goals by Gary Hooper and Grant McCann were not enough for Scunthorpe United as The Hatters lifted the Johnstone's Paint Trophy.

It was a heartbreaking defeat for Iron manager Nigel Adkins, his players and the magnificent claret and blue army of supporters.

Fans will now hope for a speedy return to Wembley in the League One play-off final.

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