

Enough to turn Newcastle grey

Luton 2, Newcastle 2

84/85

NEWCASTLE UNITED again showed closing-time weakness in defence by allowing Brian Stein to equalise from close range three minutes from the end after Heard's scrambled goal nine minutes earlier had put the visitors on the way to what would have been a flattering win, writes John Moynihan.

Waddle had set up Newcastle's second goal with a marvellous, devastating run down the left. After holding off Donaghy, he centred low from the left for McDonald to whack the ball against the crossbar, and Heard was alert enough to squeeze the ball in from the rebound.

Luton's young side deserved their point and would have won had Stein not missed chances in the second half. Their manager, David Pleat, confirmed that he will persist with his youth policy despite the dangers.

"We do have a young squad in terms of Football League experience, but we have added Colin Todd to our playing staff. Youngsters have to grow up, and that takes time.

"I will always maintain our solid beliefs in the way we play, and will always remain optimistic. . . If this season develops into a tough period without consistently picking up points, we will have to live with it and

accept the rough and the smooth."

Jack Charlton, Newcastle's manager, will meanwhile continue to fret about his defence whenever the clock hails the last quarter hour. But there were worries long before then when a fumbling Newcastle rearguard allowed Stein to move forward after only five seconds. However, the striker could not control the ball in open space.

Newcastle's all-grey strip matched the mottled greyness of the stand roof behind Carr's goal, a deflating backcloth which shrouded Parker's shot as it cleared the bar after Daniel had teed up a free-kick.

Waddle, discovered playing for Tow Law on a grisly winter's day, again showed the attacking qualities which are earning him a name in the game. Now, though, he was up against the experienced Todd, playing his first league game for Luton, and the veteran kept a wary eye on the young player. It was not until late that Waddle came up with his killing centre.

Waddle's enthusiasm spread among the Magpies as Luton's early fire dwindled. A superb through ball by McDonald cut the Luton left flank to pieces, giving Beardsley wide space to run through and lob the ball over Dibble into the net. Luton's handicap of performing without defensive mainstay, Paul Elliott,



HIGH ENERGY: Chris Waddle leaves Donaghy behind at Luton yesterday

who broke a leg in midweek against Leicester, was thus revealed.

Elliott's inexperienced replacement, North, once lobbed the ball back, nearly beating his goalkeeper, but it passed by an upright.

Luton regained some pride by equalising when Parker drove a 25-yard shot into the roof of the net after Stein's shot had rebounded to him, and came close to taking the lead before half time when Stein shot left-footed past the goal.

Stein had further opportunities later, once shooting wide with a clear chance, and then having a shot cleared off the line by McDonald after Donaghy had headed on Parker's corner.

Luton replaced Daniel with Hilaire after 64 minutes, and the newcomer's enthusiasm kept them in the game, but they were caught on the hop by United's second goal. At the last, though, Stein came up with the goods.

Afterwards, Pleat praised Waddle for the way he laid on

Newcastle's second goal. "He took on Donaghy, who is never an easy defender to get round. I thought we had enough chances to win the match—but you have to give credit to Jack Charlton's new outfit. But they would not be the same without Waddle and Beardsley."

Luton: Dibble; Breacker, Turner; Todd, North, Donaghy; Hill, Stein, Elliott, Parker, Daniel (Hilaire, 64).

Newcastle: Carr; Brown, Saunders; Heard, Anderson, Clarke; McDonald, Wharton, Waddle, Beardsley, McCreery (Ferris).

Referee: J. Bray (Leicester).