

LUTON RISE TO HARFORD

85/86

Luton ... 2 Newcastle ... 0

Bobby Robson will recognise Luton's development into one of the most technically adept teams in the First Division if he responds to the fashionable acclaim for Mick Harford, writes Michael Calvin.

The argument that Harford offers a greater variety of options than Kerry Dixon, his chief domestic rival, was given weight by his accomplished contribution to Newcastle's predictable defeat.

It was an all-embracing performance from a player whose nomadic career has been blighted by managers who have been blinded by his undeniable physical attributes.

Ironically, Harford, who could have scored a hat-trick against one of his former clubs, relied on traditional qualities for his seventh-minute goal. He out-jumped Clarke to turn in Hill's unwitting return pass.

But the close control and attacking awareness nurtured by David Pleat led Billy Whitehurst, Newcastle's dispirited debutant, to sum up: "Mick is the best centre forward in England on that form."

Andy King, rescued from Wolves, had a more satisfying re-introduction to the First Division in a Luton side whose inventive approach deserved greater reward than a second goal by Mark North, a substitute who joined the club as a goalkeeper.

Luton.—Sealey; Breaker, Thomas, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, King (North, 72), Preece.

Newcastle.—Thomas; Davies, Bailey, McCreery, Clarke, Roeder, Anderson, Wharton, Whitehurst, Beardsley, Stewart.