

ORANGE SQUASH

8/12/85

BILLY WHITEHURST could well turn out to be the answer to Newcastle's prayers for a successor to **Malcolm Macdonald**.

Whitehurst, signed from Hull for £240,000 in midweek, showed on his debut the strength and skill that will doubtless make him a St. James's Park favourite.

But Whitehurst's performance was about the only thing to cheer Willie McFaul's side as Luton calmly coasted home.

Quickfire

The pantomime season began early with Newcastle, originally dressed in drab grey, nipping off the field to change into Luton's colourful orange shirts just as the game was about to kick-off.

The hold-up lasted almost five minutes and, if you wanted to be cynical, you might have suggested that Luton's sponsors Bedford Trucks had arranged the affair.

After all, when Newcastle re-emerged,

UNITED!

By **ROBERT STEEN:** Luton Town 2 Newcastle Utd. 0

they, too, were sporting the Bedford name on their shirts. Talk about two for the price of one!

Although Newcastle spent Friday practising on the unfamiliar artificial surface, the exercise appeared to have done them little good as time and again the extra pace and bounce defeated them.

The exception, as ever, was Roeder,

surely a Mexico candidate, who always had time on his hands and regularly broke up Luton's quickfire attacks with his superb anticipation.

Luton, on the other hand, took early control with their one-touch football, and their elegant attacking left-back Thomas pulling all the strings.

Luton deservedly took the lead when Harford — who could have had a hat-

trick, scored against his old club for the second time this season.

But although Harford smacked a header against the bar and Stein just failed to lob Thomas early in the second-half, Newcastle belatedly followed the Whitehurst example and battled back.

Support

Stewart moved into the middle and answered Roeder's cajolings by getting more involved, while Davies went hungrily in support of his attack as if to suggest to McFaul that playing at right-back was not his idea of fun.

But although Thomas stopped Hill's thundering 30-yarder with a brilliant one-handed save, substitute North was on hand to pop home the rebound and kill the revival.

FORM REPORT

LUTON: Sealey 6—Breacker 7, Foster 7, Donaghy 6, ***THOMAS** 9—Nicholas 7, Hill 7, Preece 8—Stein 7, Harford 8, King (wdn) 6. Sub: North 7.

NEWCASTLE: Thomas 7—Davies 7, Clarke 6, ***ROEDER** 9, Bailey 6—McCreery 7, Anderson 6, Wharton 6—Whitehurst 8, Beardsley 6, Stewart 7.

Ref: D. Vickers (Ilford) 5.