

Newell boy is a hit

with Luton fans

Luton 2, Aston Villa 0

85/86

NEW signing Mick Newell hit his first goal for Luton to pave the way for a comfortable victory over a struggling Villa side.

Leading scorer Brian Stein grabbed his 17th goal of the season in the second half to confirm Hatters' superiority.

Mick Newell, Luton's £80,000 signing from Wigan, made his home debut yesterday. But Luton were without flu-victim David Preece. Ashley Grimes took his place.

There was generous applause for ex-Hatter Paul Elliott, who moved to Villa for £400,000 in December. The Birmingham's side battle against relegation was handicapped by the absence of suspended England starlet Steve Hodge.

It took just 50 seconds for Luton to test Spink, Stein's header from a left wing cross by Grimes being well saved by the keeper.

But at the other end, Sealey had to be quick to keep out a header by Evans as he connected with Birch's free kick.

Luton began to take charge and North was unlucky with a header that flashed past the angle of bar and post.

Spink was working overtime and he did particularly well to be first to a delicate chip by Stein and deny North.

A goal always looked likely and it came after 16

Report by Graham Punter

minutes. A dreadful miskick by Birch put his defence in all kinds of trouble and when Stein flicked the ball on, Newell pounced to slam the ball past Spink for his debut first Division goal.

Foster was coming out on top in the inevitable comparison with former team mate Elliott. A rock in defence and a danger in attack, the Luton skipper outshone Elliott, who was looking as uncertain as the rest of his harassed defenders.

Villa were under the cosh, but a long range drive by full back Norton whisked just over the bar to relieve the pressure.

A slip by Nicholas, compounded by a misfield by Sealey, nearly let in Stainrod. But with some desperate defending Luton escaped with a corner.

Then Donaghie was twice denied in a minute by his own players. First a block-buster cannoned into Hill and then a goal-bound header was intercepted by Stein, who succeeded only in spooning the ball high over the bar.

Five minutes after the break a delightful ball from Grimes put Stein clear but the shot was fluffed.



Brian Stein who was on target again

The second half developed into a scrappy affair as Luton lost their precision and Villa lacked the urgency to get on terms.

Villa winger Mark Walters who had little change out of Breacker, suddenly came alive with a drive that screamed over Sealey's bar. Kerr then saw his shot deflected by Donaghie and Sealey did well to grab the ball on the line.

Despite Villa's chances, the balance of the game was still in Luton's favour and both Stein and Newell saw good shots go narrowly

wide.

Luton went further ahead after 76 minutes. Right back Norton brought the ball under control in his own penalty area but delayed his clearance and Stein pounced to rob him and fire low past Spink.

Luton: Sealey, Breacker, Thomas, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghie, Hill, Stein, Newell, North, Grimes. Sub: King.

Aston Villa: Spink, Norton, Williams, Evans, Elliott, Birch, Kerr, Stainrod, Gray, Glover, Walters. Sub: Shaw.