

**NEW** boy Mike Newell couldn't put a foot wrong as Luton put punchless Villa on the rack.

He boosted the Hatters' fire-power by hitting their first goal and laying on the second for Brian Stein. But rebuilt Villa face a long slog for First Division survival.

Former Luton defender Paul Elliott got an ovation from the home crowd before the start — then had the Villa fans roaring as he brilliantly denied Marc North a fifth-minute goal under his bar.

Villa endured a torrid start. Spink saved from North, Birch volleyed over his own bar and both Spink and Elliott thumped balls out of the ground in a bid to catch their breath.

# Mike's magic touch

But Luton's sweeping football soon paid off — and what a dream home debut it made for Newell, their emergency £85,000 signing from Wigan.

Birch sliced an attempted clearance back into this area. Stein headed on and Newell blasted his 20th goal of the season.

Elliott battled to keep Villa afloat during some sustained Luton pressure.

It was Foster, who left Villa under a cloud, who repeatedly snuffed out the aerial threat of Gray.

Sealey denied Villa an equaliser in the 29th minute, plunging at Simon Stainrod's feet, then scrambling the loose ball for a corner as the striker looked set to score.

Villa had another chance five minutes from the break when Gray put Stainrod clear with a superb touch.

But Sealey dived at the striker's feet.

Inventive Luton deserved a second goal — and they got one.

Newell drove the ball across the box and Stein crashed the ball in.

Man of the match: Steve Foster (Luton).