

Sick Mick goes it alone

87/88

FLU VICTIM Mick Harford was Hatters' most effective weapon in the 4-0 humiliation at St James' Park — and he wanted to come off at half-time.

The big centre-forward climbed out of his sick bed in a bid to bolster Hatters' away form.

But at the end of the controversial encounter, boss Ray Harford said: "Mick was not fit after a bout of flu and he did me a favour by playing. He wanted to come off, but I thought he was still our best player."

The manager was still seething after seeing his players:

- Stuffed by a Newcastle side whose home record is nothing to shout about.

- Lose their 10th away league match of the season — now only Chelsea have a worse record.

- Play so badly that Newcastle were able to take the mickey out of them in the closing stages — which led to a fracas at the final whistle, with both Steve

**NEWCASTLE 4
LUTON 0**

Foster and Danny Wilson launching themselves at Kenny Wharton after the United player just sat on the ball.

This prompted Harford to blast Newcastle, by saying: "What Wharton did was completely out of order and hard for our players to accept."

"In some matches we might have passed the ball around, which is fair



● **MICK HARFORD**

enough, but we have never done that, and we never will.

"It was like a red rag to a bull and an insult to fellow professionals. Our self-discipline went a bit and while I don't condone it, I understand it."

Newcastle's rather lame answer was that it was their reply to similar treatment they received

when they were hammered 4-0 at Kenilworth Road — something none of the observers who saw that match were aware of.

But Harford did not let the post-match argument disguise the fact that this was an awful performance by Luton.

He said: "Our away form is a disgrace. We have now conceded 12 goals in our last three away matches and we cannot seem to defend at the moment — either individually or collectively."

"Only Chelsea in the First Division have lost more away matches than us and facts like that don't lie. Now if we are not careful, our whole season could collapse around us."

Hatters stuttered right from the start and

allowed O'Neill — a slip of a lad from Northern Ireland, who was still at school in October — to put Newcastle in the driving seat with goals in the 15th and 25th minutes.

Harford obviously read the riot act in the interval and Luton came out looking more determined for the second-half.

"If we could have grabbed a goal then it would have been different, but when Paul Goddard scored Newcastle's third goal we just collapsed," said Harford.

NEWCASTLE: Kelly, McDonald, Tinnion, McCreery, Anderson, Roder, Stephens, Gascoine, Goddard, O'Neill, Wharton.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Grimes (Allinson 67 mins), McDonough, Foster, Donaghy, Wilson, Johnson, Harford, Stein (Oldfield 73 mins), Black.