

Luton 0, Newcastle 0

NEWCASTLE goalkeeper Martin Thomas inspired his overrun team to survival and a point with a brilliant individual display at **Kenilworth Road** yesterday, writes Robert Alexander.

Thomas, a Welsh under-21 international, produced a series of breathtaking saves to defy the rampant Luton attack and underline his claim to a place in the full Wales squad to meet Finland in next month's European Championship qualifying match.

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Ignoring the disadvantageous absence of Newcastle's travelling support, who were banned from the refurbished ground by Luton's home members only policy, Thomas performed with extraordinary skill and agility as his defence disintegrated time and again.

Indeed, such was the impressive authority of Thomas's performance, his manager Willie McFaul, himself a former Northern Ireland goalkeeper, was moved to say it was the best goalkeeping display he had seen. Luton's manager John Moore confined himself to a terse: "It seemed the ball would never go in."

Without Thomas, Newcastle would have lost by six or seven goals. In the first half alone, he made eight notable saves including a brilliant series of three stops within 60 seconds after 24 minutes.

Newell was the chief victim of Thomas's brilliance which continued in second half saves from Foster, Nwajiobi and Stein, but he could also be blamed for missing several openings through his own haste.

Luton: Sealy; Breacker, Johnson, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Newell, Wilson, Nwajiobi.

Newcastle: Thomas; Anderson, Bailey, McCreery, McDonald, Roeder, Bogie, Gascoigne, Whitehurst, Beardsley, Wharton.

Referee: R. Lewis (Gt Bookham).