

MISSING YOU!

GOAL-HUNGRY Hatters' fans flocked to Kenilworth Road in hope of a scoring spree against the doom-and-gloom Geordies.

But only a handful of early birds got their wish — watching the youth team playing out an eight-goal thriller — before the main attraction.

For when the curtain came up at 3pm shot-shy Newcastle's incompetence in front of goal rubbed-off on a Luton attack sorely missing the presence of Mick Harford.

Hatters had netted nine times in three games going into the clash with the rock-bottom Magpies.

But the absence of Newcastle old boy Harford proved the vital factor as the visitors' feeble defence and Hatters' inexperienced forwards combined to create a host of chances that went to waste.

Harford's badly sprained ankle ruled him out of the game he was desperate to play in — against a Newcastle side that had gone more than 450 minutes without scoring.

His veteran head was the missing link as Hatters lacked composure in front of goal.

For though the mighty striker has netted only once this term, the majority of Luton's forward play has been directed through him.

Starlet David Oldfield took over his role and led the line well — but he was guilty of two glaring misses.

Kingsley Black found it difficult to stamp his authority on the game playing as the third forward instead of his more influential role on the left side of midfield.

And as Hatters strove

for a goal settle their nerves, Roy Wegerle — seemingly unstoppable with five goals in three games — wasted a golden opportunity.

Newcastle were the first to demonstrate their ineffectiveness with the goal gaping, when Darren Jackson powered his header over from a good position in the opening seconds — the visitors' only chance of the first-half.

far post.

Seconds later Black's scorching 25-yarder was brilliantly saved by Beasant.

And after Danny Wilson had shot wide from another promising position, Ricky Hill — fully recovered from the knee injury that had kept him out for three games — saw his shot trickle past the upright after the the keeper had intervened again.

Hill was in like a

THE LINE-UP

LUTON: Sealey, R Johnson, Harvey, Preece, Foster, M Johnson, Wilson, Wegerle, Oldfield (Allinson 81), Hill, Black. Other sub: James.
NEWCASTLE: Beasant, Anderson, Tinnion, McCreery, Cornwall, Thorn; Hendrie, O'Brien, Mirandinha (Gourlay 76), Jackson, Payne.
Other sub: Scott.

• Attendance 8338.

Left-back John Anderson came the closest to netting for Newcastle — but his delicate lob was heading for the wrong goal until it drifted just wide of the upright.

Hatters dominated the rest of the period but could not turn their possession into goals.

As the half-hour approached, Wegerle intercepted Andy Thorn's square ball to Anderson and rounded Dave Beasant, only to shoot into the side netting when Kingsley Black was unmarked on the

flash to rob Liam O'Brien on the edge of the box but the ex-Wimbledon keeper got the faintest of touches to send his shot out of play.

With only seconds remaining in the half, Richard Harvey raced forward and played a neat one-two with Oldfield but blazed wildly over when he should have done better.

Not even referee Roger Milford could believe Oldfield's awful miss 18 minutes after the re-start.

The man in the

Harford injury costs young Hatters dear

middle threw up his hands in horror when the striker whacked David Preece's inch perfect cross over from eight yards.

Les Sealey's only save of the game came in the 69th minute when he tipped over John Hendrie's chip — but the Geordies never looked like ending their agony in front of goal.

Oldfield was substi-

tuted after he failed to connect properly to Danny Wilson's pass with the net beckoning.

And there was still time for another golden chance when Wilson's slick pass to Black took out the whole Newcastle defence but the youngster pulled his cross back behind the oncoming strikers and the danger was averted.



• Oh no — David Oldfield fires that second-half chance over.