

LUTON KID OLNEY SINKS HATTERS!

THE LINE-UP

VILLA: Spink, Price, Gray, Evans, Sims, Keown, Callaghan, Platt, McNally, Cowans, Daley (Olney 33). Other sub: Mounfield.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Grimes (Dreyer 65), Wilson, Foster, Beaumont, McDonough (Meade 58), Wegerle, Harford, Hill, Black. Attendance: 15,640.

SAD HATTERS were sent crashing into the bottom three by a substitute striker from Luton.

Ian Olney, 19, netted just three minutes after entering the fray at Villa Park to condemn Hatters to the danger zone for the first time under manager Ray Harford.

The striker's first league goal was a crushing blow to a Luton side that had fought back from a disastrous start, and who surely deserved at least a point for their efforts.

He said: "It was brilliant to score against the team I used to watch occasionally as a kid.

"We left the area when I was eight but my dad's still a fan."

Though it was Olney's goal that sunk Hatters, Villa had keeper Nigel Spink to thank for the points.

Super Spink made three dramatic saves in the dying seconds of the first-half and got a hand to a goal-bound shot from substitute Raphael Meade in the second period, to leave boss Ray Harford lamenting: "I feel sorry for the players.

"We dominated the game in the second half and they have got nothing out of it.



Battered — Mick Harford.

"The early goal was a killer, and we were rocking for about 10 minutes after it.

"But we showed a bit of character after that and for a team in our position, that's very comforting."

Villa's early opener exposed Hatters' defensive weaknesses, as winger Tony Daley left Tim Breacker for dead, before cutting into the box and planting a spectacular shot past Les Sealey.

Breacker was unsettled by the goal and within a minute he was booked for a crude challenge on the scorer.

Sealey rescued Hatters after six minutes when Nigel Callaghan fired in unmarked, and

VILLA 2 LUTON 1 By MICHAEL WEINSTEIN

the keeper had to move sharply to scoop the ball off the line from the winger's follow-up.

Sealey had little else to do in the half and it was no surprise when Hatters equalised after 27 minutes.

Ashley Grimes' cross was met by flying Ricky Hill and his header crept in at the near post off Villa's Martin Keown.

Kingsley Black rattled the post from 25 yards on the half-hour before Olney put Villa back in front with a simple tap in on 36 minutes.

Spink's reflexes were like lightning when Steve Foster connected with a 40th minute corner.

Then the inspired keeper leapt high to tip over Harford's pile driver and he repeated the save 60 seconds later to deny the industrious Black.

Sealey was first in action after the re-start with a point-blank save from Alan McNally — but then Luton took over.

Mick Harford — with blood pouring from a nasty gash above his left eye — epitomised Hatters' spirit as he battled hard at the sharp end.

Meade hit the post with a spectacular overhead kick from a 63rd minute corner and he was desperately unlucky ten minutes from time when Roy Wegerle — playing his first game for a month — put him in, only for Spink to save again.



• Flying high — Steve Foster battles with Villa keeper Nigel Spink