

Sweet win for Newell

Luton 3 Hartlepool 2

03/04

LUTON striker **Steve Howard** (pictured) scored twice in the first half to set up a 3-2 victory against his hometown club and make it a sweet day for manager **Mike Newell** who was sacked by Pool at the end of last season.

Howard struck early on thanks to good work by Gary McSheffrey, who added a second shortly afterwards after being set up by Courtney Pitt.

McSheffrey created a third Luton goal for Howard, who later missed the chance of a hat-trick when he directed a header against the crossbar.

Darrell Clarke threw Pool a lifeline by pulling one back just before half time and they added a second from Paul Robinson's penalty.

It set up a grandstand finish and Hartlepool might have had another penalty when Ritchie Humphreys went down under David Bayliss' challenge.

Hartlepool manager Neale Cooper was fuming with his side as they lost for the first time this season.

Cooper said: "I was very disappointed with our performance, especially in the first half.

"A few sharp words were said at half time and again at the end because that performance simply wasn't acceptable. It wasn't the real Hartlepool.

"At half time I could have substituted any three of the 10 outfield players and they couldn't possibly have complained



because they simply didn't perform. They were nowhere near the standards of earlier games and it wasn't good enough."

Luton manager Newell admitted "we were sweating at the end".

He added: "I was actually sweating long before the last 20 minutes. I told the players at half time they would pay for it if Hartlepool could get their passing game going. Sometimes it needs Hartlepool to concede a goal before they play. I know that from my experience last season and I knew that even at 3-0 the game wasn't really over.

"At half time, my worry was that our lads might take their foot off the pedal. But I'm delighted with the overall performance. I'm sure we deserved the points."