

Newell puts art into artificial

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THERE can be little doubt that Luton's plastic pitch played a part yesterday in their crushing victory over Liverpool, the first of any kind they have managed while both clubs have been in the First Division.

It was a combination of Liverpool's obvious distrust of the artificial surface, an inefficient sweeper system and Luton's own speed and verve in attack that was responsible for the champions' heaviest defeat for three years.

Whatever the reason or reasons, Liverpool were comprehensively outplayed by opponents who have had difficulty scoring goals this season. In fact, few teams were less likely than Luton to make the Merseyside giants suffer like this.

Just to turn the knife in the wound, three of Luton's goals were scored by Mike Newell, Luton's deputy for the injured Mick Harford. Not only is Newell Liverpool-born and a former Liverpool supporter, he was on their books as an amateur!

Well as Luton undoubtedly played, and none demonstrated

On this occasion, Lawrenson and Hansen were given the marking jobs while Molby operated as the spare man. However, the bulky Dane simply did not have the pace to plug the gaps that were caused partly by the greater speed of the ball on this surface.

Liverpool were also undone by the concomitant ploy of pushing both full-backs up into midfield. The Luton forwards revelled in the space behind Venison and Beglin and exploited it to the full.

Walsh struck Liverpool's only shot of the game on target dur-

By COLIN MALAM
Luton 4, Liverpool 1

ing a first half in which his team were overrun. Grobbelaar had already saved twice, from Preece and Mark Stein, before the Merseysiders' defence finally cracked wide open after 15 minutes.

A through pass by Johnson did the initial damage, and Newell outpaced Molby to drive a left-foot shot into the bottom

gotten as Luton scored twice in the eight minutes before half-time.

Newell made it 2-0 in the 37th minute by driving the ball in off the body of an unprotected Grobbelaar. Donaghy's fine run down the left resulted in a centre that ran across the face of Liverpool's goal and stripped their defence bare.

Grobbelaar, however, had no one to blame but himself for Luton's third goal five minutes later. His failure to clear the ball properly as he came out of his area resulted in Preece transferring the ball quickly to Hill, who beat two defenders for speed and curled a shot into the empty net.

Newell completed his hat-trick seven minutes into the second half, and again Grobbelaar could be faulted. His failure to punch away Johnson's centre led to Hill's header bouncing against the bar and rebounding obligingly for Newell to head his third goal.

Rush put a rare chance over the bar before Liverpool gained some small consolation eight minutes from the end. Molby