

BY THE CENTRE, CHELSEA!

WHAT are the essential lessons we have failed to learn from the football that nearly every other country seems to be playing?

The first and most important is that the long ball is dead. Football must be a progressive, fluent approach and an intelligent use of the open spaces if it is to succeed. The man without the ball must move while the man with the ball bamboozles the opposition.

The Barcelona game rammed home the second message—that the centre from the wing is a dead tactic. Wasteful. Useless.

How many centres from the wing did Barcelona use? I watched carefully. The answer is none.

The wingers cut in to square the ball low, bring it back or occasionally chip a measured pass. But no centres. Not a solitary one.

Can we learn?

And have we learnt this lesson? Will we ever? On the evidence of this game, the sad answer is "No."

Making a careful record of every centre, I found that Chelsea sent over 37—22 from the right and 15 from the left. Add nine corners and there's a total of 46 that produced exactly one goal.

Luton centres totalled 13—eight from the right and five from the left.

Luton won five corners to give them a total of 18 crosses.

The dearth of Luton centres is easily accounted for. They were outplayed, and they carried a left-wing passenger in left-back McNally, who was injured after

Chelsea	... 59/60 ...	3
Luton Town	... 0 ...	0

By RALPH FINN

about a quarter of the game had stumbled by.

Groves, who fell back to half, was all over the place and got through a tremendous amount of work.

He and Bingham were the only Luton players who looked to be earning their keep, but only Bingham had the touch of class that suggests First Division.

Chelsea were little better. They had nothing to beat and nearly killed themselves beating it. I was not charting the number of shots that went over the bar, but they ran into dozens.

When will our professionals learn to keep the ball down? Why must they even centre when shooting?

After Greaves had hit the foot of the post with the last shot of the first half, he scored Chelsea's first. Then he squared the ball low—not a centre, mind—for Tindall to notch the second.

And with the last breath of a game that had been dying

since it began, young Jimmy ran on to the 64th centre of the game and headed it into the net. Thus it took 64 wing centres to score a single goal.

Neither side made a concerted move throughout the entire chronic 90 minutes.

Luton will go on playing this way. I see no hope for them.

Chelsea will be Chelsea—a team of talent on paper, a team of paper on the field. And England will continue to look like a combination of both these signs.

CHELSEA.—Matthews 6; Sillett (J.) 7, Sillett (P.) 7; Anderton 6, Mortimore 7, Crowther 6; Brabrook 7, Brooks 6, Tindall 6, ★ GREAVES 8, Blunstone 5.

LUTON.—Collier 5; Dunne 6, McNally 6; Brown 6, Kelly 6, Pacey 5; Bingham 7, Turner 5, McBride 6, ★ GROVES 8, Tracey 6.

Referee: F. Finney (H) 7.