

# Too much hustle and bustle

84/85

**LUTON TOWN 0, CHELSEA 0**  
MANAGER David Pleat was thankful for rather small mercies after the biggest attendance of the season so far had left Kenilworth Road on Saturday night grumbling about a fixture that failed to live up to tradition.

Twelve goals put the gloss on the entertainment in the previous three visits by Chelsea. This time, with both sides under differing pressure, the football was basic hustle and bustle, with goals rarely threatened.

## GLAD OF A POINT

Mr Pleat tried to sound happy about not being beaten, and at saving a point when similar matches in the past had seen all three vanish.

The disappointment to set against that was that once more the Town had created enough chances to have settled matters in the first 45 minutes.

Having wriggled off the hook Chelsea came out with a more determined attacking approach in the second half, and eventually a draw was fair, although either side could have snatched a winner.

It was not one of the most entertaining matches we have seen, and Mr Pleat made the point that Luton are going to struggle a bit this season as new men try to find their First Division feet.

## PRESSURE FELT?

As a team the Town were below par. Perhaps the pressure of going five games without a win does have an effect.

Brian Stein, still looking for his first goal of the season, had one good effort saved and blasted another over the bar after neat approach work by Wayne Turner and Meka Nwajiobi.

Eddie Niedzwiecki saved from Paul Elliott, and was lucky to escape when Stein beat him before crossing for David Moss, whose chip sailed a little too high.

All that happened in a first half in which Chelsea never threatened to embarrass Andy Dibble.

But they too are under pressure. The best away team in the country last season, they are still without an away win in the First Division this time.

Kerry Dixon, the Luton supporter who was more than keen to score against the Town, hasn't hit the target since the opening day of the season.

Elliott played him out of it, and was the Town's outstanding player despite being doubtful until the day of the game with a hip injury.

Wayne Turner, again used in a central midfield role, will win over the fans very rapidly if he maintains the form he showed at Nottingham and against Chelsea. "If he had been wearing a beard and been called Horton he would have been named man of the match," agreed Mr Pleat.

Dixon, 40 goals in a season for Reading in the Third Division and 30 for Chelsea in the Second, is confident that his goal famine will end, and was a little sore at Chelsea's

best late chance falling to Mickey Thomas.

He headed wildly over the bar, and Dixon was sure he would have scored if he had been the recipient of Colin Lee's cross.

Chelsea carried determination and passion over the top on occasions, with Mickey Thomas booked for a foul on Mitchell Thomas and David Speedie also cautioned for challenging Dibble long after the goalkeeper had made a catch.

Frank Bunn and John Bumstead also had their names taken after a pointless clash in injury time, and it was Bunn's good fortune that earlier the ref's catalogue of misdeeds included a linesman's flag. Bunn and Joe McLaughlan got at cross-purposes with foul and retaliation involved. The linesman eventually gave up flagging as ref Brian Stevens failed to see the signal.

Chelsea assistant manager John Hollins saw the draw as a failure for a team that wants to compete at the top of the First Division. By the end of the season he might just be grateful to be in down at the other end. So will Luton.

## MATCH DETAILS

**TOWN:** Dibble; Thomas, Elliott, Donaghy, Grimes; Hill, Turner, Bunn; Stein, Nwajiobi, Moss. Sub.: Parker, not used.

**CHELSEA:** Niedzwiecki; Lee, Pates, McLaughlan, Rougvic; Bumstead, Spackman, Thomas; Nevin, Speedie, Dixon. Sub.: Canoville, not used.

**STRIKES AT GOAL:** Town six saved and six wide; Chelsea seven saved and four wide. Corners: 8-6 to Chelsea.

**ATTENDANCE:** 16,066, highest of season so far, and compares with 16,185 and 16,006 for Chelsea's two most recent visits.

**REFEREE:** Brian Stevens, Stonehouse, Glos.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Not very good, with the Town on top in the first half and Chelsea shading the second. Too much muscle and speed for good football to flourish.