



Mick Harford . . . did not show normal fluency, but Kerry Dixon (right) was on the mark for Chelsea.

Luton in danger as Chelsea conquer

By MICHAEL CALVIN

Chelsea 2 Luton 0

KERRY DIXON restated his remarkable goalscoring ability at Stamford Bridge last night when he set up a largely forgettable victory over Luton which lifted Chelsea to seventh place in the First Division.

The air of anti-climax which enveloped an unappetising match was inconsistent with Chelsea's sudden visions of qualifying for Europe next season.

A subdued crowd and a glutinous pitch hardly made for a memorable occasion, but the home side's willingness to ignore the dispiriting circumstances proved an important factor in their initial dominance.

Their breakthrough, after 26 minutes of utter tedium, could not have been predicted—but the identity of the scorer was less than a surprise.

Still vulnerable

Kerry Dixon, rejected as a schoolboy by Luton and now ignored by Bobby Robson, converted his 36th goal of the season in formidable fashion, rising above Foster at the near post to head Nevin's flighted cross past Sealey.

That goal served to remind the visitors, beaten only once in their seven previous matches, that they were still vulnerable to a late surge from the clubs who have replaced them in the relegation area.

But the significance of Hill's absence, a key creative figure, became increasingly obvious and

even Harford, with 10 goals in his last 10 appearances, struggled to make an impact.

Chelsea maintained their urgent approach after the interval, but there was little to reward the loyalty of the 13,789 crowd.

Uninspired mood

Nevin promised more than he actually produced but prompted a flicker of interest with a well-struck free kick which Sealey did well to block at the near post.

Dixon's threat was blunted by the heel injury he sustained in a challenge with Foster. But Luton, in uninspired mood, rarely threatened to take advantage.

Fittingly, Chelsea's decisive second goal 10 minutes from time was a bizarre affair. Sealey did well to save Spackman's drive and, instead of clearing Donaghy opted to shepherd the ball towards his own goal-line before allowing Nevin to apply the finishing touch.

The manner of victory may not have sent one's pulse racing. But if Chelsea can gain maximum points from their remaining fixtures, against Stoke and Norwich, they may yet have cause to celebrate a significant achievement on their return to the First Division.

Chelsea.—Niedzwiecki; Lee, Rouvrie, J. Jones, McLaughlin, Bumstead, Nevin, Spackman, Dixon, Speedie, Thomas.
Luton.—Sealey; Breacker, Thomas, Stein, Harford, Benn, Turner, Nicholas, Foster, Donaghy, Parker, B.