

Hollins demands more of Chelsea

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By JEFF POWELL



DAVID SPEEDIE fires in Chelsea's winner

JOHN HOLLINS would like it to be known that Chelsea's best is yet to come. Even the most devout supporters among those who endured Saturday's moribund 1-0 victory over Luton will be relieved to hear it.

A lot was left unsaid both on and off the pitch but no clairvoyant gift was necessary to perceive the manager's meaning. It is safe to presume that Hollins would like his defenders to tackle more correctly and for Mike Hazard, the potential playmaker he bought from Spurs, to harness his creative talent to Chelsea's power football.

Diplomatic

'It can't be bad,' said Hollins, 'to be third in the League when the critics still don't think we've got it right. I agree we can do better so Chelsea's fans should be able to look forward to some nice surprises.'

Of Chelsea's strength and persistence no-one is in any doubt, least of all Luton. Manager David Pleat chose his words carefully when remarking on the physical attributes which 'always make Chelsea liable to give away a lot of free kicks.' Hollins was just as diplomatic when he said: 'We're not a physical team. We want to play good football. But in this League you have to be strong every week.'

'It depends on how you interpret strength. If you're going to places like Liverpool and Manchester United you can't afford to be weak and just let people run past you.'

The vigilance of referee John Martin offered Luton such good protection that the visitors had only themselves to blame for failing to capitalise on free kicks around Chelsea's penalty area.

And the Chelsea fans who voiced disapproval of the referee ought to have been grateful that he confined himself to cautioning Doug Rougvie, not sending off the huge Scotsman they call Rambo for continual infringement of the laws.

Despite the proliferation of offences — and with the occasional exception of David Speedie's irrational lapses — I could detect no real malice even in Chelsea's most cumbersome challenges.

Chase

And Speedie redeemed himself with a volleyed goal from Kerry Dixon's onward header which will do no harm at all to his chances of joining Scotland's World Cup expedition to Mexico.

The rest of the match was so disjointed that it was of no significant value to watching England manager Bobby Robson.

Hollins said: 'It wasn't a good match by any means. Pleat observed: 'For some reason I can't analyse; our games with Chelsea never seem to lift me off my seat.'

Still, Chelsea kept pace with the leaders and Luton have not yet given up the championship chase.

That didn't say much for the First Division on this particular Saturday... but Luton are having to function on raw replacements for two of their leading goalscorers and Chelsea should look more the part once Hazard reaches an understanding with his new team.

Speedie (55mins)