

LIVERPOOL GRIND ON

CHASING HONOURS in the league and FA Cup, Liverpool became the first side to do the double over the Town with a performance which won few friends among home supporters.

After an exciting and even early spell, they snatched the lead in the 16th minute through Craig Johnston, who shot low with admirable crispness after the ball broke nicely for him off Rob Johnson's attempted clearance.

The goal came too early to keep the game open. Liverpool were expert at funelling back, stifling midfield and defending a line a few yards in front of their penalty area.

They even chose the right places to concede a string of free kicks, and used a lot of brain and not too much energy on taking up time with slow passing moves in their own half. Back passes also contributed to an occasion on which Liverpool looked for victory

LUTON TN 0
LIVERPOOL 1

without worrying overmuch about entertaining the customers.

Steve Foster headed against the bar in the 52nd minute when an equaliser might well have opened up the game.

In the first half particularly they played good quick football and were probably worth a draw on overall balance of play.

David Pleat refused to back the "boring Liverpool" chants from some sections of the ground. Their narrow lead, he said, was to them a precious prize worth defending, with the three points needed for Liverpool to regain the leadership of the First Division from Everton.

My mind went back to a day at Anfield a couple of years ago, when the two sides produced a vastly entertaining and open match. Liverpool won it 6-0, with Ian Rush scoring five. This time they knew that was out of the question.

85/86
Skipper Alan Hansen disclosed that at half-time player-manager Kenny Dalglish told his team: "Don't worry about the crowd, so long as we take three points home."

It should be added that the big Liverpool following on the terraces thought it was all highly entertaining. I didn't, but I do admire Liverpool's professionalism. Perhaps they need a manager out of the David Pleat mould to become top entertainers as well.

MATCH DETAILS

TOWN: Sealey; Johnson, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas; Hill, Nicholas, Preece; Stein (Breacker, 50 mins), Newell, Harford.

LIVERPOOL: Grobbelaar; Nicol, Gillespie (Lee, 73 mins), Hansen, Beglin; MacDonald, Dalglish, Whelan, Molby; Johnston, Rush.

THE GOAL: Craig Johnston, 16 mins. Other strikes: Town four saved, six wide, one hit the bar; Liverpool four saved seven wide. Corners: 5-1 to the Town.

REFEREE: Paul Vanes, Sussex — handled everything calmly.

ATTENDANCE: 15,390, second highest of the season at Kenilworth Road.

ENTERTAINMENT: Fell off after Liverpool scored, with their priority then a policy of containment, stifling midfield, and looking for breaks using the pace of Ian Rush and Craig Johnston.