

Luton 0 Liverpool 0

by TONY HARDISTY

Deadlocked Dalglish: We need a break

89/90

FOR the second time in less than three days Kenny Dalglish shrugged aside the disappointment of dropped points to praise his players.

Denied victory by the Kennilworth Road woodwork and the brilliance of Alec Chamberlain, the title favourites should now have nine points instead of five.

They tormented Aston Villa on Wednesday night and shared the spoils 1-1. Here, shrugging aside their well-known dislike of Luton's artificial surface, they were sick at failing to win.

But Dalglish simply shrugged: "You need a break, the bounce of the ball — and we didn't get it.

"Our attitude and commitment were first class again. We played really well at Aston Villa and we have played well again here without getting the three points."

Amazingly Luton manager Ray Harford said: "I don't think Liverpool really put us to the sword."

Outstanding

It made you wonder how blinkered a manager can get as he added: "Liverpool can dominate games more than they did this one. It was a scrappy game but the important thing from our point of view is that we got something out of it."

Harford must know that Liverpool took them to the cleaners in every aspect but finishing. Luton, introducing their record £700,000 signing Lars Elstrup from Denmark early in the second half, didn't force a corner until two minutes from the final whistle.

Liverpool had taken 10 by then and Chamberlain had made a string of outstanding saves.

And with just a few seconds of a one-sided affair remaining John Aldridge, entering as



JOHN DREYER . . . of Luton on the attack against Liverpool

substitute for the impressive Peter Bearsley in the 74th minute, hit the angle of post and crossbar with a thunderous shot.

But it was Ian Rush who suffered most from Chamberlain's agility. Three times in the second half he foiled the Welsh international and also made a tremendous save just before half time from a perfect John Barnes chip.

Dominated

After a tepid start from both teams Liverpool, who left out Barry Venison to play Gary Gillespie at right back, took a stranglehold on the proceedings.

And they were never in the mood to relax their grip. Steve Nicol, Steve McMahon and Ronnie Whelan dominated the midfield and Luton

spent much of the 90 minutes back pedalling.

Left back David Burrows was inches away from giving Liverpool the lead with a low shot from a Barnes free kick in the 26th minute and Luton's only shot on target throughout the 90 minutes was a first half effort from their most enterprising forward Roy Wegerle. It was comfortably saved by Bruce Grobbelaar.

Harford sent on Elstrup — 8 goals in 13 games for Denmark — 7 minutes into the second half and explained afterwards: "I wanted to use him just for the last 20 minutes but we badly needed more fire power."

Provider

Liverpool, for all their quality play, simply could not break the deadlock. Twice within a minute early in the second half Rush was sickened by Chamberlain. Both times Nicol was the provider.

And when Chamberlain was beaten by Aldridge the woodwork rescued Luton, whose right back Tim Breacker was teased and tormented by Barnes.

How Harford could claim that "the teams cancelled each other out" is beyond my comprehension.

Liverpool were head and shoulders the better side. They did all the worthwhile attacking.

It is a mystery how, for all their superiority, we had a blank day in terms of goals. Dalglish could not explain it — but I still put them top of the pile next May.