

# Luton spurred on by bad memories

By Timothy Collings

Luton Town..... 2 Chelsea .....0

WHAT a difference a year has made at Kenilworth Road. Twelve months ago, Luton lost this fixture 3-0, slumped to 19th in the table and were plunged into turmoil.

Two changes of chairman and team manager followed before the present administration took office, unified the staff and, under Jim Ryan's guidance, escaped relegation with an unexpected last-day victory at Derby and a reliance on their own youth policy.

It was fairy tale stuff but an experience none of the current staff wants to repeat this season. Their determination to avoid being sucked into the bottom six was the deciding factor on Saturday.

Since last May, Luton have sold former captain Wilson, midfielder Kennedy and highly-rated full-back Breacker, replacing them with young talent such as Hughes, Rees and Johnson who all developed at the club under Mr Ryan during his time as reserve team manager.

The result has been a

reduced wage bill, no outlays on new players and an encouraging, if inconsistent, season in mid-table as two more experienced men, Elstrup and Williams, have blossomed again.

On Saturday, however, Luton were without Hughes, who is out for the rest of the season following surgery on a knee ligament injury, and Dowie was dropped as they searched for their first win in six games.

Farrell, a strapping reserve striker, was thrown in to lead the attack and it was his energetic display which prompted their victory.

Chelsea, seeking to revive the form which carried them to seven straight wins before Christmas, were unable to overcome the absence of such injured men as Townsend, Monkou, Dorigo and Durie.

Farrell, challenging for Preece's flighted free-kick, forced the first goal which was deflected past Beasant by Cundy and Black drilled home the second when Chelsea failed to clear a corner.