

Jones joins the Chelsea party

By Timothy Collings

Chelsea 4 Luton Town 1

ANDY TOWNSEND, making his 50th appearance for Chelsea, marked the occasion with a typically commanding performance and his second goal of the season on Saturday as the west London club claimed a comfortable victory, suggesting at the same time they may play a part in this year's title race.

Although Luton, lacking the width provided by the departed Kingsley Black, offered little resistance, particularly in the first half when Chelsea sauntered to a three-goal lead, there was plenty of evidence to show that Chelsea have both the skill and the physical power required to compete at the top.

The acquisitions of Tom Boyd from Motherwell and Paul Elliott from Celtic had already added strength to their suspect defence before Vinny Jones, signed last week from Sheffield United, arrived to stamp his personal touch in midfield alongside Townsend.

Predictably, Jones was the centre of attention on his debut as he enjoyed an

immediate rapport with the crowd, muscled possession for Townsend and even danced a jig to the fans' delight after his clearance had sent Dixon in for Chelsea's third goal.

Jones had earlier helped set up Le Saux's opener with a looping forward header before Townsend added the second with a fine shot after an end-to-end move which dissected the flat Luton defence. Wise scored Chelsea's fourth on the hour after Gray had replied for Luton and later blazed a penalty against the bar.

Gray's goal was the first registered by Luton in six hours and 47 minutes' play this season and came courtesy of an error by the young Chelsea reserve goalkeeper, Kevin Hitchcock, who failed to gather an innocuous cross from Farrell.

It was difficult to see Luton, who have now sold all three of their leading scorers last season, finding the net any other way and much will be expected of Lee Glover, who begins a month's loan from Nottingham Forest today.

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