

Chelsea trouble spot



Pleat's Luton marvels stay on survival road

Luton 2 Chelsea 0

by Ray Bradley

THE Luton marvels made it three successive League wins as they carved up Chelsea in this red-blooded clash.

To compound Chelsea's misery, full back Tommy Boyd was sent off in the 75th minute and they conceded two penalties in front of their most famous supporter, Prime Minister John Major.

Chelsea gave away the first spot-kick almost immediately after Richard Harvey had smashed Luton ahead with a superb 20-yarder from Mark Pembridge's shrewd free-kick after 38 minutes.

Referee John Deakin awarded the penalty when Chelsea goalkeeper Dave Beasant appeared to floor Pembridge in the box.

Beasant vainly protested his innocence but was shown the yellow card for his indiscretion.

John Dreyer eventually stepped up to drive home the spot-kick and Beasant can consider himself lucky to have stayed on after what appeared to be the classic professional foul.

Protest

But Beasant said: "I went for the ball and never touched him. Goalkeepers are in a no-win situation when forwards break through but I play the ball and not the man."

Luton manager David Pleat thought Beasant was lucky to survive and said: "If a goal-scoring attempt is deliberately prevented by a player it is a professional foul."

"I feel sorry for Beasant in a situation like that but he was fortunate to stay on."

"We have now gone 270 minutes without conceding a goal and that is the really important factor."

Luton's midfield inspiration was Welsh international star Pembridge, whose pace, touch and vision on the left flank troubled Chelsea's defence all afternoon.

The flame-haired midfielder

formed a lethal partnership with little David Preece, who ran himself ragged in the cause of victory.

Luton also had their heroes at the back. Skipper Trevor Peake was dominant and was supported by Richard Harvey and Dreyer.

Though Chelsea made all the running after Boyd was dismissed for bringing down Paul Telfer in the area, they never really tested Luton.

Clear

The referee had no hesitation in awarding Luton their second penalty but Mick Harford's shot hit the bar and bounced clear.

It was certainly not Chelsea's day but they clearly lacked discipline at the back and disappointed up front where Kerry Dixon and Clive Allen rarely broke through a resolute home defence.

Disappointed Chelsea boss Ian Porterfield refused to concede there was a lack of discipline and said: "We just did not get a run of the ball. We conceded two penalties and we have to accept the referee's decision but I thought both were harsh."

"We probably had 80 per cent of the game and have nothing to show for it. The first penalty completely changed the course of the game. I didn't think that Beasant had taken the man. If he did he would have been sent off."

LUTON: Sutton, James, Harvey, Kamara, Dreyer, Peake, Telfer, Stein (w'drn 86, sub Campbell), Harford, Pembridge, Preece (w'drn 70, sub Oakes).

CHELSEA: Beasant, Clarke (Inj 45, sub Stuart), Boyd, Jones (w'drn 72, sub Dickens), Elliott, Monkou, Le Saux, Townsend, Dixon, Allen, Wise.

REFEREE: J. Deakin (S Glamorgan).

TOUGH GOING . . . Chelsea's Vinnie Jones has a hard time against the twin challenge of Mick Harford and Julian James