



The clincher: Luton keeper Jurgen Sommer's despairing dive is not enough to prevent jubilant Gavin Peacock from securing Chelsea's instant Wembley return

GLENN
HODDLE may not quite see himself as the Messiah of Chelsea, but he has liberated in the London club a spirit which has lain dormant for almost a quarter of a century.

Spiritual inspiration is something close to Hoddle's heart when it comes to talking about the club's first FA Cup Final appearance since 1970.

Something within this man of religion stirred before Chelsea had even kicked a ball in this season's competition as he rested on a hotel bed waiting to listen to the third-round draw.

"I remember saying to myself that if we drew my brother's team Barnet, we would go all the way to Wembley," he said after this semi-final triumph.

Adversity

"I fell off the bed when we did, and that is where it started."

Hoddle added: "It is not to do with my religion, more a spiritual thing—a belief within yourself that a certain thing will happen. It is a very personal thing but it does give you strength."

"It gives you the strength to carry on when you face adversity, like we did before Christmas."

"That's when you really get called upon. It's not a 100 per cent thing, of course, otherwise I wouldn't have to turn out every week."

"I told the players it is no good just thinking about having a good Cup run. You have to focus on Wembley and believe you are going to go there, and it is amazing how often a team get to Wembley and go back there the next year."

"That is just a mental preparation and that is what we have tried to instil from the third round because I have had very strong feelings we would do it."

What Hoddle has always had faith in, of course, is that the game of football should be performed with the kind of style and flourish he exemplified as a player.

Wembley can't quite be what it was because the FA allow the semi-finals

Hoddle's faith gives Chelsea a vital edge



Flying start: Proud Peacock volleys the ball home to put buoyant Chelsea on the way to their first FA Cup Final for 24 years

Cup clash with brother proves to be a happy omen for Glenn

By **STEVE CURRY**

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



to be played there—a decision born more of avarice than the stated grounds of security. Nor did this match live up to the traditions of its setting. But we should be thankful it brings to the final on May 14 a young manager whose idealism should make a good showcase for the watching world to witness.

Sublime

This is not, let me stress, the Chelsea of Osgood and Cooke, Hollins and McCreadie who lifted the trophy in an Old Trafford replay against Leeds.

They were a side of extravagance and outrage, of sublime skill and flamboyant finishing. But

then, the Chelsea of the Nineties in general is not the Chelsea of the late Sixties, when the club symbolised a swinging generation and the fans owed more to Beatlemania than today's more sinister, chanting rallyists.

Before they found full throat with their adapted version of the Red Flag (whatever happened to Blue Is The Colour?) it looked as though the more sedate, smaller Luton contingent with their quaint Henley boaters might have their day.

Luton started well but Chelsea came on strongly, scoring their goals during the most damaging times of the game—early in the first half and at the start of

the second. Gavin Peacock, who scored both, was one of the players who seemed to fit the surroundings.

He is a young, all-purpose footballer who would have been the ideal, old-style inside-left, scheming and scoring.

"It was excellent finishing," confirmed Hoddle. "He kept his head tremendously well."

Terrific

"He has proved a terrific buy for the club. He is a player who is between a striker and a midfielder."

"The system I like to play allows that kind of player to flourish, and he is perfect for the role."

It was ironic, however, that both Chelsea's goals should involve the aerial strength of Tony Cascarino with crucial flicks-ons because this flies in the face of Hoddle's normal get-it-down-and-pass-it philosophy. Cascarino's

experience of the big occasions with Jack Charlton was a useful asset, though it was Hoddle and Peter Shreeves whose strategy for the occasion proved ultimately important.

"We took along the music box and had a bit of music to keep us nice and relaxed," said Hoddle.

"What we play is a bone of contention because our soul brothers like their kind of music and others, like myself, like something a bit heavier, so we have a balance."

Yet Chelsea behaved as though the pitch were littered with land mines in the early stages as Luton passed the ball around.

Luton manager David Pleat said: "At half-time we were quite buoyant and I thought we would turn them round."

"But the second goal, two minutes after the restart, was the decisive blow."

HERO CASCARINO OUT IN COLD

TONY CASCARINO will not be unpacking his bags despite his crucial role in Chelsea's FA Cup semi-final victory over Luton.

Republic of Ireland striker Cascarino helped create both of Gavin Peacock's Wembley goals just two weeks after being set for a transfer deadline move.

But he admitted: "I can't see anything changing—manager Glenn Hoddle has got his own ideas and I don't appear to figure in his plans."

Clubs queued up for Cascarino's signature last month with Tottenham leading the chase for a man who will be among the Irish World Cup squad in America this summer.

"I'm pleased I stayed as we've got to the Cup final and I've done my bit," said Cascarino, 31, signed from Celtic after spells with Aston Villa, Millwall and Gillingham.

"I'm delighted the gaffer has given me the chance to come back into the team, although injuries to other players might have pushed him into that

Tony is still on his way

position. I will not be offered a new contract but it's been a massive incentive knowing I'll be going to the World Cup."

"I still think I've a lot to offer. I know I'm as good as anyone in the air."

Two headers paved the way for Peacock but Cascarino nearly didn't appear for the second-half. Revealed Chelsea coach Peter Shreeve: "He had a groin injury and I was considering taking him off."

Former Chelsea idol Kerry Dixon, due for a testimonial at Stamford Bridge at the end of the season, summed up Luton's feelings.

"You only have to look at the faces in the dressing room to see the disappointment," he said.

KEVIN MOSELEY