

WHITE-WASHED!



● ALL WHITE ON THE NIGHT: Watford defenders groan as Steve White turns to celebrate his second winner against them this season.

Match Details

WATFORD 0, LUTON TOWN 1

Half-time: 0-1

TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Aizlewood (West, 56 mins), Saxby, Price; Hill, Grealish, Donaghy; Stein, White, Moss.

WATFORD: Steele; Henderson, Harrison, Sims, Jackett; Blissett, Train, Callaghan (Taylor, 45 mins), Rostron; Poskett, Jenkins.

THE GOAL: Steve White, 11 minutes, after brilliant work by Brian Stein, going past two men and pulling the ball back into the centre.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town six saved, five wide; Watford six saved and seven wide.

ATTENDANCE: 16,939—Watford's second highest of the season, thanks to an influx from Luton.

REFEREE: Alex Hamil, Wolverhampton—over-fussy at times, and could have let the game flow more smoothly with better use of the advantage law.

ENTERTAINMENT: Boring said the Watford Press contingent. Smashing, said the Luton fans, enjoying the sweetest double of the season.

Reports by Brian Swain
Pictures: Mark Richards

3445 11-11-80 Striker on target again for season's first double

STRIKER Steve White, dropped then transferred after scoring the winner against Watford in the second game of this season, put the smile back on a couple of thousand Luton faces at Vicarage Road on Tuesday night.

He struck the only goal of the game, to make it four 1-0 wins in a row to the Town in local derbies since Watford returned to the Second Division.

The joyous salute from the Town supporters at the end of 90 tough minutes was in sharp contrast to the moans and groans of the Watford fans. They didn't appreciate the Town's slow and methodical second-half battle to blunt Watford's limited attacking ideas.

Manager David Pleat bristled when his side was accused in the Pressroom of boring 16,000 customers, particularly with the use of an offside trap which creaked a couple of times, but finally contributed to victory.

"We closed down Train and Rostron. Mike Saxby made me proud to see how he held Jenkins in the air. And sometimes we had to be clever and push out to deny Watford space. If that's the offside trap, the other side has to be clever enough to beat it."

Watford's inability to turn second-half pressure into goals may have coloured the views of their supporters, although there were times when the Town lived very dangerously.

Graham Taylor, confessing that his side had been outplayed in the first half, added that he thought the Town had made a mistake after snatching the early lead. "If we had done that, I would expect to see us going forward and trying to get a second goal," he said.

"I thought we were very fortunate at half-time in that Luton weren't interested in getting more goals. They looked a class above us in possession, and we were fortunate they didn't take us apart.

"I got the feeling they thought a draw would be a good result, and were prepared to work to give no more than one away. We had the chances in the second half, but we didn't put them away.

"I don't complain about opponents' tactics, and so far as the offside trap is concerned, the only answer to that is to beat it."

The nearest Watford came to doing that was when the linesman rightly kept his flag down early in the second half as the ball was booted upfield.

Les Taylor, a £100,000 signing making his Watford debut as sub in the second half, nipped on as Jake Findlay advanced out of the penalty area, and just beat him to the ball. His header was going goalwards until David Moss bared back to clear.

Moss had baffled Watford. He played deeper than usual, behind Brian Stein and White, in the first half, and all the quality football flowed from the Town.

Tony Grealish, right back to form after his struggles at Loftus Road, blunted Watford's early thrusts by clearing off the line when a corner was only half-cleared, and the Town bounced back for the vital goal in the 11th minute.

STRANDED

Stein, the man of the match, took a pass with his back to goal just outside the penalty area, down the Town's right flank. He twisted and turned, leaving two defenders stranded, and crossed low for White to drive a fierce shot past Eric Steele.

For the rest of the half, it was almost cat and mouse, with the Town building moves patiently,

and Watford chasing shadows.

But not for the first time this season, the lustre dulled a little after the break.

Lanky Jenkins beat Saxby only once in the game, and after Findlay deflected his shot the ball was hammered back into the goalmouth. New boy Taylor was so surprised at having a clear sight of goal he completely miskicked.

Malcolm Poskett put another chance wide after Luther Blissett beat Mark Aizlewood, and Findlay made a good save from Blissett's header after a corner by Wilf Rostron.

PRESSURE

Alan West went on as sub and introduced more variety into a midfield which had become defence minded to combat increasing Watford pressure.

Mal Donaghy reverted to left back, and Watford frustrations grew as the Town used every dodge in the book to use up time and interrupt Watford's rhythm. The referee added on two minutes at the end, but took no further action.

Ironically, for all the activity around the edge of the Town penalty area, some of the best chances were at the other end. Moss put one inches wide with a low shot, then forced Steele to make a flying save near the angle of post and crossbar.



● THROUGH: Brian Stein beats two men on the run that brought the goal at Vicarage Road.