

SPORTS
NEWS 1

Town Match Verdict ★★★★★

DERBY DELIGHT

Watford sunk by a tactical switch

WHILE SUPPORTERS were celebrating the best local derby win for 45 years, Luton Town manager David Pleat showed the detachment and clinical determination to seal perfection which must make him a First Division manager one day.

To most Town fans, victory over Watford — and this was the fifth in a row — is only slightly less welcome than promotion and a win on the pools.

REPORT BY BRIAN SWAIN
PICTURES: MARK RICHARDS

The Town skipper had the game was all over by half-time, when the Town were three-up and cruising. But, surprisingly, they weren't taken in when Mr Pleat tried to persuade them over the half-time tea that they had to go out and imagine it was 0-0 and start all over again.

Why should they? Watford had been destroyed, with their 100 per cent away record as shattered as their morale.

Mr Taylor paid brief tribute to the Town's skills, and then explained at some length that if the Watford supporters wanted someone to blame he was the guilty party.

He used teenagers Nigel Callaghan and John Barnes as midfield flank men, and the unfortunate youngsters just about vanished without trace as the Town's new approach tore Watford apart.

pressure four days previously.

Watford were kept in the game for the first half-hour because Steve Sherwood made good saves from Hill, Fuccillo and Horton.

his most effective match so far, and the use of three orthodox men in midfield gave the front men a much better quality of service.

Pat Rice tried to avoid being taken apart by Moss by standing well off, marking spaces instead of opponents, and the Town punished Watford for such foolishness.

TWO PENALTIES

Striker Gerry Armstrong went back to help defend his own goal-line, and brought down Moss to try to stop a by-line run. Moss scored from the penalty, and then repeated the trick four minutes later after Ian Bolton had bundled Brian Stein over.

Two minutes before half-time a lovely break by Hill opened up Watford down the middle, and from his pass Stein controlled the ball quickly to blast the third goal from the inside-right position.

ANTI-CLIMAX

The rest was anti-climax as the Town let Watford back into the game in terms of possession, particularly after Stein's second goal, in the 52nd minute.

Fuccillo, always strong in the tackle, won the ball in defence, broke forward powerfully, and sent Moss away down the left-wing. Rice very kindly stood off again and, as the centre was delivered, Stein met it with a header to make it 4-0.

Watford had a couple of half-chances after that, and Fuccillo had to clear off the line from Steve Sims in a late flurry, but the only reward for a side that deserved little on the day was a 66th-minute goal for Ian Bolton, whose 20-yard free-kick took a deflection off Horton to beat Jake Findlay.

Mr Pleat is most certainly a Luton Town fan. And he did very much enjoy the fact that his best win of the season, and the Town's best team performance, came against the local rivals. What's more, Mr Pleat's pre-match tactical planning made it all possible.

But while a lot of us felt like dancing and singing, he made a point which should worry managers much further afield than Vicarage Road: "I know we're second in the table, and that this was a good win, and well-deserved."

"But really we've done nothing yet, and we can play better. So far we have hinted that we can do good things. Perhaps against Watford we suggested it more strongly."

Watford boss Graham Taylor baffled the Press-room with science. If his team played half as well as he talks they will be in the European Cup Final in a couple of years.

His problem was that

Match Details

LUTON TOWN 4, WATFORD 1

Half-time: 3-0

LUTON TOWN: Findlay; Stephens, Saxby, Donaghy, Aizlewood; Hill, Horton, Fuccillo; Stein, White, Moss. Sub: Antic, not needed.

WATFORD: Sherwood; Rice, Sims, Bolton, Jackett; Taylor, Callaghan, Blissett, Barnes; Jenkins (Foskett, 45 minutes), Armstrong.

THE GOALS: David Moss two penalties, 33 and 37 minutes, after Gerry Armstrong fouled Moss and Ian Bolton fouled Brian Stein; Stein with two gems, shot from Ricky Hill's pass, 43 minutes, and header from Moss's centre, 52 minutes; Ian Bolton for Watford, 66 minutes, free-kick taking a deflection off Brian Horton.

OTHER GOAL ATTEMPTS: Town nine saved and six off target; Watford five saved and six wide. Corners: 9-6 to Watford, mostly in second half.

ATTENDANCE: 12,839, day's second biggest in the Second Division, but a thousand down on the last time Watford were here.

ENTERTAINMENT: Sheer joy for Town supporters, but even David Pleat says his team can still play better.

REFEREE: Brian Stevens, Gloucester: must be good, because neither side had the slightest complaints about him, although Geoff Hurst gave a TV opinion that neither penalty should have been given.

BOOKING: Luther Blissett for a foul on Moss.



KILLER GOAL: Brian Stein is airborne as he crashes in the Town's third to destroy Watford by half-time.

VICTORY TAKES GRIP
OF SECOND PLACE
AND A £1,000 BONUS

THE MOST satisfying win of the season put the Town clear in second place in the league table, and brought them a £1,000 lipsmacking bonus this week — The Pepsi Golden Goals prize for being the Second Division's top scorers in September.

The Town are a point behind Sheffield Wednesday, but two points clear of the rest.

Wednesday, top of the table since their win at Kenilworth Road, bounced back after their first defeat, at Barnsley, by winning 1-0 at Grimsby with a second-half goal by Terry Curran.

Only two goals conceded makes Wednesday's defensive record the best in the division, but their attack has averaged just one goal a game except for the day they put three past Jake Findlay.

It was Grimsby's third consecutive defeat, two of them at home, and after being second in the table a month ago they have now slipped down to tenth.

Norwich held on to third place despite a 1-2 defeat at Chelsea, where Phil Driver, a former Luton Town apprentice, got the winner. It was Chelsea's first win in four games, but they still had the day's biggest Second Division gate, 14,509, and on Monday night they moved above Norwich on goal difference after a 2-0 win at Orient.

The surprise packet is Oldham, who are sixth, a point behind Chelsea, Norwich and Watford, after their third consecutive 2-0 win, this time at home to Cambridge.

Oldham are now the only unbeaten side in the division, but the three points for a win policy is not helping them too much—they have drawn half their six games so far. Under the old system they would be only two points below top spot, instead of four.

Down at the bottom Bolton managed their second win of the season on Tuesday night, 1-0 at home to Newcastle, leaving Orient and Wrexham, the Town's next opponents, sharing last place in the table.

Goals are shared around

WITH ONLY seven games played, there are already nine names on the Town's score-chart, although one of them is Charlton's Don McAllister for an own goal.

David Moss's first goals of the season bracket him with Mark Aizlewood, who also has two. Brian Stein's first double since his hat-

trick at Bristol Rovers last December, gives him a total of three goals, the same as Steve White.

Four players have scored one so far: Mal Donaghy, Ricky Hill, Mike Saxby and Raddy Antic.

THE TOP TEAMS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Sheff Wed	7	5	1	1	9	2	16
Luton Town	7	5	0	2	15	10	15
Chelsea	7	4	1	2	10	8	13
Norwich	7	4	1	2	11	11	13
Watford	7	4	1	2	8	8	13
Oldham	6	3	3	0	10	4	12
Blackburn	7	4	0	3	8	7	12
Leicester	7	4	1	2	10	8	13



NEARLY FIVE: Steve White is forced too wide to score by a two-man tackle in the second half.