

SPORT AND MOTORING NO CLASSIC, BUT DERBY TALENT COUNTS



● OPENER: Brian Stein darts goal-side of his marker to put the Town ahead 74 seconds after kick-off.

Liverpool let off lightly

THE delight for Luton and despair for Watford were increased by the other weekend results at the top and bottom of the First Division.

The Town edged nearer the leaders, and jumped back up to fifth place because Spurs were the only other top ten teams to win. Watford's troubles piled up with news of victories for three of their colleagues in distress, Wolves, Leicester and Notts County.

The Town are on 26 points from 15 matches, five points behind leaders Liverpool, who might easily have lost top spot.

Kenny Dalglish made history with his ninth goal of the season, which gave the champions a 1-1 draw at Ipswich. It made him the first player ever to score 100 goals in the Football League and the Scottish League.

Liverpool's comparative failure gave West Ham and Manchester United extra incentive when they met at Upton Park on Sunday. The winners were sure of regaining first place, but the draw was exactly what Liverpool wanted, and got, in the best live TV game of the season so far.

Spurs maintained their championship hopes with a 3-2 home win

over QPR, taking their current run to nine league games without defeat, in which they have taken 23 points out of 27.

Shock of the day was at the Hawthorns, where bottom club Wolves beat West Brom 3-1 to record their first victory of the season after taking only four points from their first 14 matches.

Leicester added to Watford's problems with their second win of the season, 3-0 at home to Arsenal, and even Stoke collected a point with a 1-1 home draw against Nottingham Forest.

Notts County are staging a revival after a long spell in the

FACING a relegation battle after the heroic exploits of last season, Watford manager Graham Taylor is this week having to take a dose of the unpalatable medicine David Pleat had to swallow last season.

Frank Bunn's late winner settled a derby game marked more by endeavour and effort than by skill and talent. Taylor complained that Watford didn't deserve to lose, but that was less than fair on the Town.

Watford will never give up a game or a season without a fight. They showed every sign of being prepared to run until they dropped. But they didn't have the little touch of quality and talent that made the difference at Vicarage Road.

COOL CONTROL AND PATIENCE

The sum total of Watford's honest toil was that they prevented the Town from playing the expressive and flowing football that can destroy teams. But once the Town had settled down to play with cool control and patience, it was clear that Watford were not going to be winners.

If the Town failed to hit the heights, the truth was that they didn't need to.

Most of the entertainment came in the first half, with things very nearly working out to the plans laid by the Town. They had reverted to the old reliable formation, with Brian Horton and Bunn returning to midfield after injury and Wayne Turner at left-back again.

Paul Elliott and Mal Donaghy resumed their central defence partnership, and were helped considerably by the

fact that Watford have replaced Luther Blissett by the cumbersome George Reilly.

As a team Watford were not the strong opposition we are used to seeing.

Their deafness was caught standing and watching when the Town snapped into the lead after only 74 seconds. Paul Walsh dribbled down the left wing and passed to Stein, who was unmarked seven or eight yards from goal. He punished that slackness with a careful low shot into the net.

Watford tried to produce their traditional bombardment to keep the Town's defence busy, but while they pressed forward often enough they showed none of the composure they needed.

Horton and Bunn were both much closer to goals when the Town broke forward with accurate passing, and perhaps if Walsh would settle for beating two men and then passing instead of looking for a third and fourth victim the result would have been much more decisive.

Watford equalised when debut full-back Peter Bardsley atoned for his first-minute slackness by attacking down the right wing and sending a cross to beyond the far post.

Reilly, in front of goal, was being policed well enough, but Nigel Callaghan was left clear as the ball went over the top to him, and his looping header back across goal dropped into the net.

John Barnes and Callaghan probably deserved better support in Watford's attack, and Barnes was let down when he beat Kirk Stephens three minutes before the interval and delivered a perfect cross which Maurice Johnston headed against the bar.

If that had been a goal we might have had a cracking second half. Instead Watford seemed to realise that they couldn't win, and that a draw was worth saving.

SOAKED UP THE PRESSURE

The Town showed much more control in playing the ball out of defence. They soaked up stereotyped Watford pressure with some ease, and looked much sharper when they broke forward.

Ricky Hill joined Stein and Walsh in a battle of individual skill and confidence against four teamwork. It was stalemate for a long time, with Watford having a let-off in the 62nd minute.

Stein got round the defence down the Town's left wing, thumped a hard low cross into the goal area and Elliott, throwing himself feet first at the ball, stabbed a close-range effort against a post.

Turner had to head a bending shot by Callaghan off the line at the other end, but that was the only second-half occasion when Les Sealey was in the slightest danger.

The winner, six minutes from time, was an illustration of the differences between the sides. Watford were mesmerised as Stein and Walsh worked the ball down the right wing.

Stein's shot from Walsh's return pass rebounded into the air, and Bunn capped his return with a thundering low shot from the edge of the penalty area which left Sherwood helpless.

REPORTS
By BRIAN
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● KILLER: Frank Bunn, almost hidden by Paul Walsh, lashes out with his right foot and the winning goal is on its way.

Match Details

WATFORD 1 LUTON TOWN 2

Half-time: 1-1

TOWN: Sealey; Stephens, Elliott, Donaghy, Turner; Hill, Horton, Bunn; Stein, Aylott, Walsh. Sub: Antic, not needed.

WATFORD: Sherwood; Bardsley, Sims, Franklin, Price; Jobson, Roston, Callaghan; Barnes, Reilly, Johnston. Sub: Porter, not used.

THE GOALS: Brian Stein for the Town, 74 seconds, low shot from Paul Walsh's short cross; Nigel Callaghan for Watford, 31 minutes, looping far post header from Bardsley's cross; Frank Bunn for the Town, 84 minutes, low drive after attack by Stein and Walsh was beaten off to the edge of the penalty area.

OTHER STRIKES AT GOAL: Town six saved, eight wide and one hit a post; Watford five saved, eight wide, one hit the bar. Corners: 11-2 to Watford.

ATTENDANCE: 17,791, second highest league gate of the season so far at Vicarage Road, but more than 2,000 down on last season's derby.

REFEREE: Dennis Hedges, Oxford—pleased no-one from either side with some very peculiar decisions. Even his linesmen were seen to take different views of several incidents.

ENTERTAINMENT: Pretty good first half, but too dour in the second. The Town didn't hit top form. They didn't need to.



● ENJOYMENT: Frank Bunn shows his feelings at scoring the winner in the local derby. Watford's defenders look less happy with life.

TOP SIDES

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Liverpool	15	9	4	2	25	9	31
Wolves	15	9	3	3	27	12	30
West Ham	15	9	3	3	28	16	30
Man Utd	15	9	3	3	27	21	28
Spurs	15	8	4	3	27	21	28
LUTON TOWN	15	7	4	4	20	18	25
Coventry	15	7	4	4	20	18	25

STRUGGLERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Notts Co	15	4	2	9	18	26	14
Stoke	15	2	6	7	15	26	12
Watford	15	2	4	9	16	30	10
Leicester	15	2	4	9	16	30	10
Wolves	15	1	4	10	11	35	7

● Not including Leicester v Southampton last night.