

It's Luton —at a real gallop!

Luton 3 Watford 2

LUTON emerged breathless but triumphant from a frantic match that condemns their nearest rivals to further anxiety at the foot of the First Division. The optimism prompted by Watford's first win of the season at Chelsea last Saturday was increased when they twice seized the lead. But Luton's superb second-half show was too much for them.

Luton, also in the bottom four before the match, climbed up the table after an encounter that did nothing to scupper this fixture's reputation for incidents.

Last year, two players were sent off, and this time it was again played at an amazing pace, containing five goals—one of them a real freak.

Yet, after such a feast, manager David Pleat and Graham Taylor both refused to comment.

Watford dominated the first half, but their inability to transfer superiority into an interval lead proved costly. They did go ahead after eight minutes when Nigel Callaghan's left wing corner was headed towards goal by George Reilly. Luton 'keeper Jake Findley, playing his first match for 18 months, punched the ball away, but the linesman judged that it had crossed the line.

Luton drew level after 21 minutes when Richard Johnson's attempted back pass from 20 yards loomed high and wide of Watford 'keeper Tony Coton.

Stunning

Chances continue to come at a thrilling rate and Watford recaptured the lead in the 27th minute.

And it must have been the most satisfying moment of the match for Watford boss Taylor as Riley and Luther Blissett combined with stunning effect.

Riley combined well with Mo Johnston last season and Blissett with Ross Jenkins in the past. But here was Italian misfit Blissett receiving a pass from Riley and slamming the ball home.

A minute later, though, and Frank Bunn equalised with a shot from 15 yards, making it three goals in seven minutes.

Luton, inspired by Ricky Hill, snatched the initiative after half-time.

Mal Donaghy headed against the bar after 47 minutes as Luton made their intentions immediately clear.

And Luton sealed victory when Steve Elliott, receiving a pass from Hill, drove in an angle shot from 15 yards after 61 minutes.

Luton looked more likely to add to their lead, but the gap between the two sides at the end of the season is unlikely to be much greater than the stretch of the M1 that separates them.



Watford's Luther Blissett snaps a quick header at goal as Mal Donaghy of Luton sails in with a challenge