

An old fashioned cup tie

DAVID PLEAT summed up the FA Cup derby clash at Kenilworth Road when he said after Monday's game: "There was plenty of raw football." While the Fifth Round tie was panned by some Fleet Street scribes as being a bore and devoid of pure football, it lacked nothing in commitment.

"It is the 14th time we have played each other and I think that was the first goalless draw," Pleat said of his clashes with Graham Taylor's Watford. "Everyone had their money's worth. It was certainly exciting."

It was, in fact, a typical cup tie with the result in doubt until the final whistle. In comparison to last season's Third Round tie and replay, it lacked much in the way of flowing movements. "Last season's match at Vicarage Road had everything you would want from a cup tie," said Pleat. "But you cannot please everyone. After we went out 4-3, the following day a Luton fan complained to me that all seven goals were scored as a result of mistakes!"

Had Watford at Newcastle demonstrated half the commitment and determination that they displayed at Kenilworth Road, the result on Saturday may well have been different.

"A soft pitch, a local derby in the cup under lights. One had a good idea what sort of game it was going to be and it turned out just as expected," said Taylor after Monday's match.



"The referee could have booked six players but entered into the spirit of the exchanges and let the game go on. He saw there were no vendettas and no really nasty tackles. Players prefer that sort of refereeing because you know where you stand."

Taylor was pleased with the resilience Watford showed on Monday night, standing up to tackles and competing for every ball. The sides were well matched with Luton shading the first half and Watford the second.

"Watford are never an easy side to play against," said the Luton manager, "and I am not talking about styles of play. They play at such speed the danger is that you tend to start playing the same way."

One could question that remark, however, for Luton started with the long ball play.

Wilf Rostron, with his scalp split as he bravely dived in an attempt to prevent Stein's drive, played for much of the game with a blood-speckled shirt, epitomising the spirit in the Watford camp which had rejuvenated after the limp surrender at Newcastle.

Rostron, along with John McClelland were the pick of the Watford defenders while in midfield Jan Lohman and Les Taylor battled to negate the threat of Luton's trio. Up front, Jimmy Gilligan began to get the better of Steve Foster as the game went on and although Luther Blissett had another

However, it was a terrific thrill for Mark as the partnership stormed through the early rounds and even came back from two frames down in the semi-final against top London potters Pat O'Kane and his partner to snatch a memorable win 3-2. The local League's conventional partnerships fared less well with Gary Robinson and Steve Brown having most success reaching the third round before meeting a top



His spur-of-the-moment offer to partner Steve Saunders was gladly accepted and led to the scratch twosome having a tremendous run in the event before losing out in the final to ironically Dave Dolman and his new partner Piggy Wilson.

Luton 0.....Watford 0

LUTON: Sealey; Breacker, Thomas, Turner, Foster, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, Harford, Nwajiobi, Daniel. Substitute: Parker not used.

WATFORD: Sherwood; Sinnott, Terry, McClelland, Rostron, Taylor, Lohman, Callaghan, Blissett, Gilligan, Sterling. Substitute: Bardsley not used.

Attendance: 18,506. Referee: B. Hill (Northampton).

Share of play: Watford 50 per cent.

Free kicks: Watford 24, Luton 33.

Corners: Watford 5, Luton 11.

Goal attempts on target (off target): Watford 10 (10), Luton 5 (10).

Watford goal attempts by: Blissett 5, Callaghan 3, Taylor 3, Gilligan 3, Sterling 2, Sinnott 2, Rostron 2.

Bookings: None.



All action at Luton but on this occasion the ball seems incidental.

was slightly more extended than Sherwood overall. On balance a draw was a fair result in a game which could have gone either way.

Luton, playing down the slope, had the first opening when Donaghy headed the ball across goal and Nwajiobi missed his connection. At the other end, Blissett found Callaghan with a crossfield ball which rebounded off a defender and enabled the winger to cut in and attempt a snap-shot as the tackle came in — the ball going wide.

Watford had something of an escape when Nwajiobi's shot

the absence of Spaid. Luton's resources to cope with the weekend when the two rivals clashed in the National Sports Centre. After their 49-29 victory in shooting 20 goals out of 28 Player of the Match title for Edbrooke were outstanding. Gill Bickerstaff and Rostron formance in which forwards jeers with a thorough per-crowd, the girls silenced the Centre, in front of a hostile Inside the Bunyan Sports amateur.

attempted to round an opponent, fell some two feet inside the box but the referee awarded a free kick outside instead.

Callaghan promptly hit the free kick past Sealey but the ball hit the underside of the bar and bounced out — Sterling hooking the rebound behind.

"That's three times Callaghan has hit the woodwork this season with free kicks," said Taylor. "On each occasion it was a matter of an inch or two between us drooling over a great free kick or just forgetting about it. Some people don't get the luck."

There was anxiety when Sherwood appeared hesitant contesting a lofted ball from Foster and Nwajiobi almost capitalised, and then McClelland clashed with the winger in an incident that looked dubiously like a penalty possibility.

The tackles continued and Steve Terry was fortunate not to get booked for a cynical foul on the escaping Nwajiobi and later Harford was similarly fortunate for a lunging tackle on Lohman.

Watford's edge on second-half chances was confirmed when Blissett opened up the Luton right flank and Taylor's first attempt span to Gilligan who drove goalwards. Sealey again saved well with his feet and Luton scrambled the ball clear.

There was a final worry for Watford, when Stein almost picked up on a back-pass from Terry but in the end, both sides deserved the right to fight it out again.