

FA CUP SPECIAL

DERBY

THE BEST recovery they have staged since they were at Watford in the cup last year earned Luton Town a draw at Vicarage Road last night to set up the third local derby match in five days.

Two teams who have tried to batter each other into submission over 34 hours of non-stop action will resume their own local cup final at Kenilworth Road on Saturday.

Today Watford must be kicking themselves for falling victim to a double counter-punch from opponents who seemed to be down and out with 15 minutes to go.

Even the managers looked as though they had taken it on the chin after extra time failed to produce a conclusive knock-out between two teams who had battled to a standstill in a scoreless draw at Kenilworth Road 48 hours earlier.

Luton boss David Plead had most to be pleased about. Watford's Graham Taylor had seen his side

backed by the majority of the crowd of nearly 20,000, lead 2-0 with 14 minutes to go before the Town at last hit form to earn the draw.

As at Luton on Monday, either side might have sneaked a winner, but on balance neither deserved to lose.

The turning point came when Plead realised that his first choice formation was not attacking as well as it was defending. He sent on 19-year-old Garry Parker in

BRIAN SWAIN
REPORTS ON
LAST NIGHT'S
CUP REPLAY
AT WATFORD



PICTURES BY
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place of Ray Daniel after an hour's play, and two goals in four minutes all but knocked the stuffing out of Watford.

"Another good game," was the verdict of both managers, although Plead added: "I'm sure the crowd enjoyed it more than I did!"

In the first half Watford had the territorial advantage and they deserved to

be in front. It wasn't quite as frenetic as it had been at Luton on Monday, but when we went two down we had to make a change to make our approach more effective."

Parker went into the right forward berth in midfield. Ricky Hill switched to the centre and Wayne Turner took care of the left side, and suddenly Watford's composure was rattled.

They had had the best of the first 45 minutes, and my watch was five seconds into stoppage time when they made the first breakthrough.

Steve Foster, massive and dominating in the heart of the Town's defence, was adjudged to have riddled Jimmy Gilligan in the back 30 yards from goal.

Nigel Callaghan, who threatened a lot and achieved little against Mitchell Thomas, floated the free kick to the far post. John McClelland headed back

across goal and Les Taylor shot low into the net through a forest of legs.

Watford tended to bypass midfield with long aerial passes, but skipper Wilf Rostron broke that pattern six minutes into the second half to set up the second Watford goal.

He produced an old-fashioned winger's run towards the corner flag, beat Daniel with a superb cross, and defender Steve Terry charged up from the back on the blind side to hammer in a close-range shot.

The Town, who had been unlucky twice in the first half, could have been forgiven at that stage if they had thought it was not going to be their night.

In the opening seconds Steve Sherwood got into a tangle and flipped a flick by Meka Nwajobi on to his

own bar, with Brian Stein failing to cash in when a goal looked imminent.

Mick Harford, mobile and brainy as well as brave in the air, was desperately unlucky with a raking angled drive which clipped the woodwork with Sherwood beaten.

But Watford seemed to make the mistake of thinking they were good enough to rest on their two-goal lead for the last 20 minutes or so.

The Town's policy had been to contain in defence and look for something on the break, but the counter-attacks rarely looked like breaking down a rugged Watford defence.

Jan Lohman again made his intimidating presence felt with some crunching tackles, particularly on Ricky Hill, but slowly the Town's more measured approach put them back into contention.

Both goalkeepers made good saves, but full-back Lee Sinnott made a crucial error in the 76th minute. He stood and waited for an offside flag as Parker attacked down the Town's right.

Nwajobi made a curving run across the penalty area, collecting the pass as the crowd shouted for offside, and cleverly waited for Sherwood to advance before lobbing him.

Nwajobi said later he did not know if he was offside or not. Watford boss Taylor refused to moan about it. "I didn't think it was offside. And when a forward is in that position, you don't even try to play him offside — it's much too risky."

Suddenly Watford's confidence started to evaporate as the Town's grew. Four minutes later Hill, all running and defiance against

Town Match Verdict ★★★★★

CLASH SET FOR THIRD MEETING



NEARLY: Garry Parker, whose introduction rejuvenated the Town, won his luck with a free kick.

Match Details

WATFORD 2 LUTON TOWN 2
(After extra time)

HALF-TIME: 1-0. 90 MINS: 2-2

TOWN: Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas; Hill, Turner, Daniel (Parker, 60 mins); Nwajobi, Stein, Harford.

WATFORD: Sherwood; Sinnott, McClelland, Terry, Rostron; Taylor, Lohman; Callaghan, Gilligan, Blissett, Sterling (Bardsley, 90 mins).

THE GOALS: Les Taylor for Watford, last seconds of the first half, low shot after Gilligan headed back far post free kick; Steve Terry for Watford, 51 minutes, far post shot from Wilf Rostron's right wing run and deep cross; Meka Nwajobi for the Town, 76 minutes, clever lob with Watford appealing in vain for offside after neat pass by Garry Parker; Ricky Hill for the Town, 80 minutes, deflected shot from edge of the box from a left wing raid he started from midfield with Mitchell Thomas.

OTHER STRIKES: Town six saved, 14 wide, two hit the bar; Watford ten saved, 12 wide. Corners: 16-1 to Watford.

ATTENDANCE: 19,867, making a total of 38,373 who have enjoyed the two games so far in a crunching local derby.

REFEREE: Brian Hill — certainly tried to keep the game flowing, but if he takes the third match on Saturday might have problems if he continues to be so lenient over intimidating tackling.

ENTERTAINMENT: Similar to Monday's first meeting, with Watford using powerful boots and good running to try to snuff out the Town's more thoughtful approach. Each style is right for the men working it and another draw was a fair result.

physical opposition, started a move down the right, kept going as Thomas, Nwajobi and Stein carried on the attack down the left, and scored with a deflected shot.

And it was Watford who were more pleased to hear the 90-minute whistle go, with Harford heading a late half-chance over the bar.

The pace never slackened in extra time, with Sealey performing wonders to keep out a crashing drive from Lohman and another by

Callaghan, and Sherwood saving from Stein and being let off lightly as Harford put three efforts narrowly wide.

And it may be significant for Saturday's second replay that Stein's best sell came after Parker had been sent on to attack down the right, with Stein dropping off into a deeper role.

McClelland was pulled out of position several times to create more space than the Watford defence had conceded earlier.



OLD FRIENDS: Mick Harford and Steve Terry in action during one of the long-running personal battles that have been part of the marathon cup-tie.

Dispute on next round

A HOME tie with Third Division Millwall, and a very good chance of going into the semi-final, is the prize for the winners when Luton and Watford finally settle their local derby.

Few seats for Saturday's second replay are likely to be on general sale. Season ticket holders have until 5 pm tomorrow evening to claim their seats, and Watford have been sent an allocation which was expected to be snapped up in quick time at Vicarage Road.

But it will not be an all-ticket match—Watford will again be given the Kenilworth Road open end, with the Oak Road end restricted to home fans, with admission by cash payment on the turnstiles.

Yesterday a dispute was brewing over arrangements for the sixth round. Luton and Watford want to have as long a rest as possible after Saturday, and want to play Millwall on Wednesday (7.45). Millwall want to play on Tuesday. If no mutual agreement is reached, the FA will arbitrate, and they are likely to order the game to be played on Thursday.

If the cup-tie is drawn again on Saturday, the replay will be at Vicarage Road on Monday (7.45), with ticket arrangements to be announced by the clubs on Saturday after the final whistle.

Only if the Town lose on Saturday will the Nottingham Forest match be played on Tuesday.

This season's run is the Town's best in the seven years since David Plead became manager, and if they win on Saturday it will put them into the sixth round for the first time since 1973, when they went out at Roker Park to eventual winners Sunderland.

This week's two cup games have already helped the finances of both clubs—provisional estimates are that they have grossed nearly £100,000 so far, although net income will be much less.

It is split three ways after match expenses are taken out—one-third to each club and the other third to the FA Cup pool. Expenses for the fourth round tie are likely to be much higher than usual owing to the cost of work done to try to beat the weather when the match was first due to be played, on February 16.



SO NEAR: Brian Stein is beaten by a bad bounce in the first minute with Watford goalkeeper Steve Sherwood unable to intervene after flipping the ball against his own crossbar.