

CLASH SET FOR THIRD MEETING

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 ridged 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 by-pass 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 Nwajiobi 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.

Nwajiobi 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.

Nwajiobi 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



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

Match Details

WATFORD 2 LUTON TOWN 2

(After extra time)

HALF-TIME: 1-0. 90 MINS: 2-2 84/85

TOWN: Sealey; Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas; Hill, Turner, Daniel (Parker, 60 mins); Nwajiobi, 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 Nwajiobi 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, Nwajiobi 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 spell 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.