



● Joy for Luton . . . misery for Watford. The Hatters celebrate their winning goal at Vicarage Road.

**WATFORD 1
LUTON 2**
By GRAHAM
PUNTER

MR T put the 'A team' back on the winning trail in Saturday's derby at Vicarage Road.

The Mr T in this case was Steve Terry, the unfortunate Watford centre-back whose late own goal shot Luton into eighth place in the league.

Manager David Pleat stuck by the first choice line-up, dubbed the 'A team', despite the previous week's shock home defeat by Coventry.

And his refusal to panic was fully justified as Luton took command and remained in charge throughout the game.

Purpose

Watford's Graham Taylor again left out Blissett and Callaghan and persevered with the unfamiliar line-up that lost narrowly a week earlier at West Ham.

The match took place under the gaze of England manager Bobby Robson, who must have

Mr T's blunder puts them 8th



MITCHELL THOMAS
... opening goal

gone away with more questions than answers.

Luton's England hopefuls — Hill, Harford, Stein and Thomas — all performed well without reaching the heights of which they are capable.

If the main purpose of Robson's appearance was to check on Barnes, he will have reached no conclusions.

But he may well have been forced to write Foster's name in his notebook after another



● DAVID PREECE
... so busy

outstanding performance by the discarded international.

Luton had the edge on Watford in all departments — sounder at the back, sharper at the front and very much more inventive in midfield.

Watford's four-man front line didn't give Luton's established and composed back four enough to worry about and they were able to play the ball out from the back.

Then in midfield, Hill, Nicholas and Preece had numerical superiority and were able to enjoy spasms of creative play that threatened to unhinge Watford's wobbly defence.

The early exchanges saw no clear-cut chances for either side although it was already clear that this game was well within Luton's grasp.

Twenty-eight minutes had elapsed when the breakthrough came.

Preece, who spent the game drilling some delightful balls through the Watford defence found Stein and although keeper Coton blocked the shot, Mitchell Thomas raced in to score his first goal for Luton.

The opening moments of the second-half saw Watford predictably step up the pressure but it was not sustained and as Hatters stitched together some passing

movements the threat subsided.

Hatters appeared to be coasting towards ending Watford's unbeaten home record with eight minutes remaining.

But then a right-wing cross eluded both Luton's defence and Watford's attack but found Brian Talbot popping up on the blind side to crash in the equaliser.

But Luton were not finished and they found another gear to put Watford under the hammer in the dying minutes.

Deserved

The winner came when a cross by Stein was going nowhere until a wild attempted clearance by Terry sliced past his own keeper.

The goal itself was cruel luck for Watford, but the impact it had on the match was no more than Luton deserved.

WATFORD: Coton, Bardsley, Terry, Sinnott, Rostron, Talbot, Jackett, Sterling, Barnes, Allen, Porter. Sub: Smillie.

LUTON: Sealey, Breacker, Foster, Donaghy, Thomas, Hill, Nicholas, Preece, Stein, Harford, Nwajiobi. Sub: Daniel.