

HARRISON LIMPS OFF AT BARNESLEY

Weakened Town fight back in vain

By ROGER DUCKWORTH
Barnsley 3 Luton Town 1

WITH A cold mist rolling damply down from the Yorkshire Moors and spilling into Oakwell, Luton Town ran out for the second half trailing 2-0 at Barnsley last night. Within three minutes they had pulled a goal back and looked, for half an hour, as if they were good for at least a point.

But in the 76th minute they submitted to their third consecutive away defeat — the biggest for more than a year — when Barnsley made it 3-1 to seal a fine performance. The game was watched by Barnsley's biggest home gate of the season.

Town, crippled by the absence of goalkeeper Tony Read, leading goal scorer Brian Lewis and right winger Graham French were further disabled by the loss of left winger Mike Harrison in the 27th minute, with a pulled muscle.

The result was that they were out-gunned in the first half by an impudent Barnsley side that simply oozed confidence.

Seeking vengeance for their 5-1 defeat at Luton in

August, Barnsley had all the answers. Mobile as London taxis, they tore Luton apart in the first half and left the field with a well deserved ovation ringing in their ears.

Chief worry

Chief executor of vengeance was half-back John Bettany. Called back from an unlikely place on the sidelines he took it on his own shoulders to carve open Luton's ranks — as if it were a personal vendetta.

Always finding space for himself he seized an opportunity and pushed a ball behind the Luton defence for Jimmy Robson to make Barnsley's first goal. The former Burnley and Blackpool player crossed and John Evans drove it past Bill Taylor.

Time: 15 minutes. For the first 12, Luton had looked as good as they had all season. Long runs by Dougan and Rioch broke down at the last minute; Branston and company were coping with the situation in the bulwarks.

But once they had the confidence a goal brings, Barnsley went to town. Bettany and Earnshaw treated Luton with disdain as they rampaged among the Town's ranks.

By now Rioch was limping from a kick on the hip, and then Harrison pulled another muscle. He left the arena in the 27th minute to be replaced by Billy McDerment who played his best game of the season — beginning on the left-wing and later roving about industriously.

On the half hour Laurie Sheffield, Luton's best forward, had a header brilliantly saved on the goal line by Ironside. As if in retaliation Earnshaw hammered in Barnsley's second in the the 38th minute. Again Bettany opened up Luton's defence and Evans headed his pass for Earnshaw to hammer home.

Deputy goalkeeper Bill Taylor saved well from Hamstead and Bradbury but Luton pressure just before the whistle had a flat-capped Barnsley fan pleading with the referee to "get 'em up that tunnel."

Sheffield's goal came in the 48th minute. Rioch, still limping, hit a free kick into the goalmouth and with Branston acting as a decoy the centre forward found space and headed past Ironside.

Suddenly Barnsley's lead looked paper-thin. Rioch twice went close and Ryan, working like a beaver, shot just wide.

DIVISION THREE									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts		
Bournemouth	12	8	1	3	20	7	17		
Luton	12	7	2	3	24	12	16		
Barrow	12	7	2	3	20	14	16		
Torquay	12	7	1	4	21	13	15		
Reading	11	5	4	2	23	15	14		
Rotherham	11	5	4	2	16	11	14		
Watford	12	5	4	3	10	8	14		
Tranmere	12	6	2	4	17	16	14		
Stockport	12	5	4	3	19	15	14		
Swindon	10	5	3	2	10	4	13		
Northampton	11	4	4	3	11	10	12		
Plymouth	11	5	2	4	14	13	12		
Mansfield	12	4	3	5	18	18	11		
Bristol R	11	4	3	4	17	22	11		
Barnsley	13	3	5	5	17	20	11		
Orient	11	2	6	3	14	16	10		
Walsall	13	2	6	5	13	15	10		
Brighton	10	3	3	4	15	19	9		
Southport	12	4	1	7	16	24	9		
Crewe	12	2	4	6	19	23	8		
Shrewsbury	11	2	4	5	10	17	8		
Hartlepool	10	1	6	3	5	13	8		
Gillingham	11	2	2	7	15	20	6		
Oldham	12	1	2	9	6	26	4		

McDerment was doing well in an unaccustomed position on the left, and at times he swapped with Rioch, who also showed considerable skill as a winger.

Luton were poised to grab a point when Robson robbed Dougan, put Hamstead away and the winger's shot went underneath the diving Taylor into the net.

That was that! Time: 76 minutes. Three minutes from the end a Rioch free kick hit the outside of a post but Luton's fight was lost.

Taylor made some good

saves. Tony Read will be out for at least a fortnight with his dislocated finger, so his understudy cannot afford to lose any confidence.

Dougan, apart from his lapse, defended stoically, as did Branston and Jardine.

Keith Allen, brought back to prove himself, did more than enough. He was Luton's labourer. He and Alan Slough were outstanding in defence.

Ian Buxton celebrated his return — he replaced Lewis — with a skilful performance. He provided a strong mid-field link and, with a bit more luck, could have sparked off a Luton comeback. Sheffield could do no more. He chased and chivvied all night.

Depleted Luton never gave in, but they have pocketed only two of the last available eight points and on Saturday they have a bit of catching up to do with a home game against Hartlepool.

BARNESLEY: Ironside; Murphy, Brookes; Bettany, Winstanley, Howard; Earnshaw, Evans, Robson, Bradbury, Hamstead. Sub: Booth.

LUTON: Taylor; Dougan, Jardine; Allen, Branston, Slough; Ryan, Buxton, Sheffield, Rioch, Harrison. (McDerment).

Referee: Mr P. Baldwin — Thornton-in-Cleveland.

Attendance: 12,815.