

Luton put under pressure

KENILWORTH Road erupted with scenes of emotion this afternoon as Luton received the Second Division Championship Trophy.

The ground was well-packed 30 minutes before the kick-off and there was a glorious reception as chairman Denis Mortimer and his directors preceeded Manager David Pleat, coach David Coates, physiotherapist John Sheridan and the players.

The supporters, many dressed in Luton shirts, were in good voice and greeted the presentation of the trophy by Brian Winston, a member of the Football League's management committee, with a deafening roar.

Dozens of Junior Hatters, all in Luton kit, added a nice touch to the proceedings and the team completed a lap of honour for the benefit of the Town's fans.

On the footballing side, Pleat reinstated Fuccillo to his team with Antic dropping into the substitute's position.

There was a nice gesture from Barnsley who lined up to applaud Luton on to the pitch as they ran out.

Conditions for the crowd were ideal, but the warm sunshine would obviously provide a serious obstacle for the players.

Barnsley mounted the first attack which ended with Money lashing the ball clear from a left wing cross.

Barnsley looked dangerous in the opening minutes and Banks attempted to finish a three-man move but Findlay was not seriously troubled by his low shot.

It was clear Barnsley had not come for a draw and their early attacks emphasised they would be looking for the three points.

Luton Town: Findlay, Stephens, Money, Horton, Goodyear, Donaghy, Hill, Stein, White, Fuccillo, Moss. Sub: Antic.



Barnsley: Horn, Law, Chambers, Riley, Banks, McCarthy, Evans, Walker, Aylott, McHale, Birch. Sub: Mann.



Kirk Stephens shows superiority in the air in this dual for the ball at Kenilworth Road today

LUTON v BARNSLEY

by Eric Harris

When Luton retaliated, Fuccillo attempted a dig at goal which ended with Horn making a rather easy save from his bobbling shot.

Then Stein outpaced two defenders to test the keeper with an effort from the edge of the area.

Barnsley's first corner arrived in the ninth minute when Hill nudged a dangerous cross behind and it was left to Stephens to complete the defensive

operation with a long clearance.

There was a nasty moment for Findlay in the 13th minute when he was stretched to collect Chambers' cross from just under the bar as Barnsley pressed forward again in search of the early goal.

Luton were struggling to prise gaps in a positive Barnsley defence as the visitors maintained their tight grip on the game.

Barnsley could have

made the breakthrough after 17 minutes when McHale almost surprised the Town's defence with an extremely ferocious shot which flashed only inches wide.

Barnsley were the most direct side so far and were never afraid to shoot on sight as they continued to surge forward.

A promising Luton move involving Stein came to an abrupt halt when he was crudely up-ended by Evans which gave the

Town a free kick just outside the box.

It almost produced the game's first goal when Horn was hard pressed to save Moss's stinging low drive.

The Town came back again when Hill took advantage of a through ball to send his shot wide in the 29th minute.

There was little in the match for the fans to enthuse over and the Town could have gone behind in the 34th minute when Walker met a cross from the right which Stephens did well to poke clear.

But Barnsley still looked the team more likely to go in front as they continued to run at the Hatters' defence.

Stein almost gave the Luton fans something to shout about with a glorious through ball which found Moss, who was crowded out, and the opportunity evaporated.

There was five minutes left to half time when McCarthy was booked for a foul on Stein as he attempted to run through.

Then the striker turned well to send a shot over the top.

In the 43rd minute, Law was the second Barnsley player to receive a booking when he threw the ball at White during a stoppage.

HT: Luton 0, Barnsley 0.

Luton opened the second half by winning a corner immediately. But it was cleared without Barnsley's defence being put under any pressure.

The game desperately needed a goal to bring it to life and to give the fans something to bite on.

And four minutes into the second half it came as no great surprise when Barnsley went in front — although it took a penalty to do it.

Birch received a throw-in and jinked his way inside the box where he was pulled down by Findlay.

There was no doubt about the offence and BIRCH stepped up to beat Findlay with the penalty.

Luton now faced an uphill battle and, as Fuccillo attempted to break, he was brought down by Riley who became the third Barnsley player to be booked.

The penalty stung Luton into retaliation and Hill put pressure on Barnsley's defence with a forceful run.



Watched by the referee, Brian Stein beats his man in today's match against Barnsley