Dixon's gem of a goal proves worthless

Big match facts

TOWN: Sommer; James, Peake, Johnson, Thomas, Teller, Hendrick, Oakes, Harvey (Stainton 74 mins); Dixon, Marshall. Unused subs: Bunkhead, Pleat, goalkeeper David Watson; Eaden, Davis, Fleming.

BARNSLEY: Ward; Redfearn, Wilson, Snodgrass, Mowbray, O'Connor. Unused subs: Bullock, Payton and Rammell. Under 15 goals.

BOOKINGS: 0-1, 47 mins: Kerry Dixon, superb strike from 25 yards, from a pass by Derek Oakes. 1-1, 66 mins: Paul Wilkinson low drive after a free kick was flicked on by Andy Rammell and Andy Liddell. 1-2, 71 mins: Andy Liddell, crisp shot down the inside right channel trap and getting clear from the inside right defender. 1-3, 71 mins: Liddell again, after Jurgen Sommer hit an attempted clearance straight to him. 1-4, 90 mins: a big open space.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Town seven saved and tour wide; Barnsley six wanted right wide and one saved by Sommer after he advanced the ball on to a pass.

CORNERS: 10-8 to the Tykes.

REFEREE: Peter Berry. Scunthorpe: looked well in control, but some of the Town players felt he was let down by a linesman when two offsides were given for Barnsley's second goal, and they were frustrated at the Barnsley kick that led to the third Barnsley goal, the free kick that led to the third goal, and the Barnsley goal. Town felt that had to the third should have been a foul, not the perpetrator.

BOOKED: Steve Davis, for his third foul on Kerry Dixon who was terrorizing him.

ATTENDANCE: 4,808 in a stadium where standing terraces behind both goals. But the 457 from Luton create an unreal atmosphere.

did their best to improve it.

ENTERTAINMENT: A good match for Town followers for the first hour, but the team caved in after that.

TOP MAN . . . Luton striker Kerry Dixon (No.9) ready to take the applause after his stunning goal at Oakwell.

FOR AN hour at Oakwell Luton Town looked well for their first win at Barnsley in 40 years.

If facts weaken about the loss of John Hartson, Kerry Dixon gave them an earnest left with a classic goal, a gem to compare with the many jewels he has paraded over the years.

Eighteen minutes later Yorkshire grit and determination, aided by a little luck and some remarkable passing football, had condemned the Town to their third away defeat of the season.

Danny Wilson's men became the first to complete the double over the Town with a display which got better as time went on, while the Town's fell away.

Both sides needed the points to keep up relegation worries, and both had selection problems.

Suspensions cost Barnsley experienced captain Gerry Taggart and fellow defender Charlie Bishop. The Town sorely missed Hartson in the last 20 minutes or so, when he would normally have been sent on as sub, as fresh young legs in attack.

More crucially, David Preece's ankle injury sidelined him, and well though Richard Harvey played as the surprise choice as skipper in the field of midfield that area was the one Barnsley attacked with devastating results in the decisive third of the game.

Just to see Harvey in action again was heroic he is a "Steady Eddy" player, no ring flashy, but a dedicated grafter who had to overcome appalling injury problems.

It was only his second league game two and a half years and although he looked dependable enough in helping the Town control the first half, the lack of ball passing ability was a drawback.

Not surprisingly Harvey felt the pace of was replaced by Aaron Skelton soon after Barnsley went 2-1 up.

Town fans, who won admiration for their loyal vocal support, and defiant in the foul-mouthed chant about "Terry Butcher b**ards" were upset at the crucial decision by referee Neil Berry to award a shifting second half goal against Paul Wilkinson.

The Town had looked better value for the second half, better able to keep the ball with the strong wind behind them, without having to much danger in the penalty area.

Dwight Marshall's pass to Dixon's ability to hold off Steve Davis, was shrewd tactical, with the Barnsley defender eventually chasing and hacking for one foot too many on Dixon.

Jurgen Sommer turned wicked pressure from Andy Rammell, who should have gifted Barnsley the goal that clinched matters. Gary Waddock, who had been effective as the kingpin in midfield, chose to pass back to the keeper.

Sommer had time to control the ball and choose where to send it. Unaccountably he pushed out Liddell, 25 yards from goal, and Rammell, who had already moving with Town defenders already moving splendid.

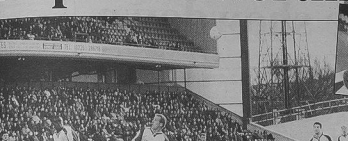
Liddell confessed later that he was unlucky to receive such a good pass – straight to his feet, and with no opponents anywhere near.

He overcame his surprise, took the ball forward a few paces, and rifled in his second goal as centrifuller Sommer made the taken advantage to cut down the angle.

The keeper made a good last-minute save at the feet of Rammell but the way of the world in football is that he will be remembered more for the danger he dropped than for the good shots he held.

And on the second half pattern of play the result was right, whatever the excuses Fans will be tempted to make about the referee's decision.

BARNSLEY 3
LUTON TOWN 1
(Half-time 0-0)



FLYING BOOTS . . . Barnsley defender Steve Davis gets airborne to make a clearance as Kerry Dixon (also pictured Inset) and Marvin Johnson look for an opening.

Pleat offers no excuses

THERE WERE no excuses from David Pleat about another defeat on a ground where he has never tasted victory as a manager.

It was Luton Town's first league visit to Oakwell, and the last of three victories there was in the 1952/53 season.

Even Pleat's all-conquering championship side of 1981/82, beaten only four times that season, was outmanoeuvred 4-3 at Barnsley.

This time, he said, it was a case of: "Barnsley finished better than us".

But he agreed that co-pilot had shown a better goalscoring ability than Kerry Dixon, with the opening goal. The boss said he could not judge the claims that Liddell was offside when he got the second goal, but the free kick that led to the first was a decision that could have gone either way.

"I thought it was good entertainment," said the Luton manager.

"In the first half particularly, we looked the classier side, but when Barnsley came at us they were not strong enough to resist."

Former Town skipper Danny Wilson, chief enjoying his football as a 35-year-old player/manager, was not entirely happy with his personal contribution on a day when anything would make it difficult for two sides who want to play a passing game.

"I thought we played well as the second half," he said. "In the first half the pass let us down.

"But I was delighted that we came back so quickly after that tremendous strike by Kerry Dixon. I felt it was one-way traffic after that.

"We were ready for this game. We had lost the previous three, including a cup-tie against Aston Villa, and like Luton it was important to get a win to start a run in a restriction.

"We were able to get more men forward in the second half, and everything Andy Liddell took his goals very well. He is going to be a very good player."

DANNY WILSON . . . The Barnsley player-manager and former Town skipper

How they stand

ENDLEIGH LEAGUE FIRST DIVISION

	HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Middlesbro	26	9	1	2	23	9	5	5	4	17	15	48
Wolves	27	10	2	2	29	13	4	3	6	20	21	47
Bolton	27	9	3	1	23	8	3	5	6	16	21	44
Tranmere	27	10	2	3	31	13	2	5	7	9	17	43
Sheff Utd	27	8	4	2	24	11	3	5	5	19	18	42
Barnsley	26	8	2	3	25	14	3	5	5	15	19	41
Oldham	27	5	6	3	15	11	6	2	5	16	15	41
Watford	27	7	3	3	19	12	3	5	7	14	20	38
Grimsby	26	7	6	1	19	11	2	3	6	9	17	38
Luton Town	27	3	3	7	17	19	7	4	3	19	15	37
Millwall	27	6	3	5	22	14	3	5	6	17	18	35
Derby Co	26	5	5	2	15	9	4	4	6	15	18	36
Stoke	26	6	4	3	21	14	2	4	7	20	25	34
Southend	27	8	2	3	16	9	2	3	9	12	37	35
West Brom	27	8	2	2	16	8	2	3	9	11	25	34
Charlton	26	6	3	4	20	14	3	5	4	17	20	33
Sunderland	26	2	8	3	12	12	4	3	6	14	13	31
Portsmouth	27	4	5	5	18	17	3	4	6	13	21	30
Swindon	26	6	5	3	21	18	1	3	8	13	24	29
Port Vale	25	6	3	4	19	14	1	4	6	11	20	28
Burnley	24	3	5	3	17	15	3	4	6	9	19	27
Bristol City	27	4	4	5	12	16	2	2	9	8	20	24
Notts Co	26	4	6	6	17	3	2	2	9	9	19	21

HELD OFF . . . Steve Davis blocks an attempt by Dwight Marshall to reach a cross as goalkeeper David Watson gathers the ball.

DAVID PLEAT

Luton Town's season at a glance

DATE... OPPONENTS... RESULT... TOWN SCORERS... ATTENDANCE... LEAGUE POSITION

ENDSLEIGH LEAGUE DIV I

		August 1994		
13 West Brom	(H)	1-1 (Oakes)	8,540	
20 Derby Co	(A)	0-0	17,560	
27 Southend	(H)	2-2 (Hartson, Harvey)	5,918	17
30 Tranmere	(A)	2-4 (Hughes, Hartson)	5,480	20
		September		
3 Port Vale	(A)	1-0 (Marshall)	8,541	15
10 Burnley	(H)	0-1	6,911	16
13 Bolton	(H)	0-3	7,164	20
17 Watford	(A)	4-2 (Teller 2, Dixon, Johnson)	8,880	16
24 Millwall	(A)	0-0	7,150	16
		October		
1 Bristol City	(H)	0-1	6,533	20
8 Stoke City	(A)	2-1 (Marshall, Preece)	11,712	18
15 Middlesboro	(H)	1-1 (Marshall 2, Preece)	8,412	11
		(Hartson, og)		
22 Sheffield Utd	(A)	3-1 (James, Dixon, og)	13,317	7
29 Barnsley	(H)	0-1	7,212	10
		November		
1 Grimsby Tn	(H)	1-2 (Oakes)	5,839	12
5 Wolves	(A)	3-2 (Preece, Marshall)	26,749	8
		(Dixon)		
12 Oldham Ath	(A)	0-0	7,501	8
19 Portsmouth	(H)	2-0 (Dixon, Preece)	8,218	5
26 Swindon	(A)	2-1 (Dixon, Oakes)	9,455	5
		December		
3 Sheffield Utd	(H)	3-6 (Hartson, Johnson, og)	8,516	6
11 Derby	(H)	0-0	8,400	10
17 West Brom	(A)	3-1 (Oakes 2)	14,360	8
26 Reading	(A)	0-0	11,523	12
27 Sunderland	(H)	3-0 (Oakes 2, Hartson)	8,953	9
31 Notts County	(A)	1-0 (Teller)	6,249	8
		January 1995		
2 Charlton Ath	(H)	0-1	7,642	8
14 Barnsley	(A)	1-3 (Dixon)	4,808	11
		February		
4 Oldham Ath	(H)	1-1 (Oakes)		
11 Grimsby	(A)	2-0		
18 Swindon	(H)	2-0		
22 Portsmouth	(A)	1-1		
25 Bristol City	(A)	2-0		
		March		
4 Millwall	(H)	1-0		
11 Port Vale	(H)	2-0		
14 Southend	(A)	1-1		
18 Tranmere	(H)	2-0		
21 Burnley	(A)	1-1		
25 Watford	(H)	2-0		
		April		
1 Bolton	(A)	1-1		
8 Notts County	(H)	1-0		
15 Sunderland	(A)	0-0		
17 Reading	(H)	1-0		
22 Charlton Ath	(A)	1-1		
29 Middlesboro	(A)	1-3		
		May		
6 Stoke City	(H)	1-0		

COCA-COLA CUP (First Round)

		August 1994		
23 Fulham	(H)	1-1 (Oakes)	3,287	
	(A)	1-1 (Marshall)	5,134	
		Luton lost on penalties.		

FA CUP (Third Round)

		January 1995		
7 Bristol Rov	(H)	1-1 (Hartson)	7,571	
18 Bristol Rov	(A)			

Who's who

APPEARANCES... GOALS

League appearances (as sub in brackets)

Sommer	27
Peake	27
James	27
Johnson	27
Teller	27
Preece	25
Marshall	21 (5)
Thomas	21 (2)
Waddock	21
Oakes	20 (6)
Dixon	17 (2)
Hartson	11 (9)
Hughes	8 (1)
Greene	6
Allen	4
Linton	3 (2)
Skelton	3 (2)
Stainton	3
Harvey	2
Adcock	(2)
Woodshird	(1)

League goals

Oakes	7
Dixon	6
Marshall	5
Hartson	5
Preece	3
Teller	2
Hughes	1
James	1
Johnson	1 per
Own goals	

Assists

Teller	8
Marshall	6
Preece	5
Hartson	5
Thomas	4
Oakes	4
Dixon	3
Hughes	1
Johnson	1

CUP APPEARANCES... GOALS

Cup appearances

Sommer	3
Waddock	3
Peake	3
Johnson	3
Teller	3
Preece	3
Oakes	2 (1)
Marshall	2 (1)
Hughes	2
Greene	2
Dixon	2
Linton	1 (1)
Thomas	1
Hartson	1
Harvey	1
Houghton	1
Skelton	(1)
Adcock	(1)

Cup goals

Oakes	1
Marshall	1
Hartson	1

SAVED . . . Barnsley keeper David Watson scrambles the ball clear as Dwight Marshall's pacey run goes close to making it 2-0 to the Town.

WELCOME BACK . . . Richard Harvey makes a tackle in his first league game since Easter 1993.

REPORTS BY BRIAN SWAIN
PICTURES BY GARETH OWEN