

Big 51-year wait ended by 10 men!

LUTON TOWN conceded a dreadful goal after just 50 seconds and saw their goalkeeper sent off in the first-half but the 10 men still rallied to secure the club's seventh away win in the league this season and their first in Barnsley since 1952.

The Hatters had lost 11 and drawn one of their last 12 league visits to Oakwell, but Tony Thorpe's predatory brace and a long-range special from Matthew Spring ensured Joe Kinnear's men recovered from a calamitous start that had suggested the club's enforced 17-day break from football could prove counter productive.

That it didn't spoke volumes for the Hatters' resilience and work-rate under Kinnear against a Barnsley team that struggled to capitalise on their extra man advantage once Spring levelled the scores with his terrific strike on the stroke of half-time.

Barnsley, now facing the real prospect of relegation to the Third Division just five years after leaving the Premiership, had dominated the opening exchanges and could have, at least, trebled their lead in the first 20 minutes.

The Tykes were gifted a goal with the game not even a minute old because of a breakdown in communication between Chris Coyne and Carl Emberson.

Coyne let a long hopeful ball drift over him believing he had heard Emberson instruct him to leave it.

But the ball was never going to carry to the Hatters keeper and a delighted Kevin Betsy stole in to round Emberson and roll the ball into an empty net.

An ugly head-to-head post-mortem then ensued between Coyne and Emberson before captain Kevin Nicholls pulled the furious duo apart.

Joe view



It was a great result achieved by great team spirit and the fact we did it with 10 men made it even better. We did not get off to the best of starts but you can never write us off. It was a great strike by Springy and Thorpey looked very sharp when he took his goals. We are seeing the best of him.

Emberson insisted that he had told Coyne to clear his lines and Kinnear later said that he believed the Australian defender was the more culpable of the two players irrespective of any shout.

Bruce Dyer's firm shot was beaten out well by Emberson on 13 minutes and Gary Jones' volley rattled the crossbar from 15 yards moments later.

Ex-Watford striker Dyer then twice shot across the face of goal before Emberson completed another disappointing day at the office on 36 minutes.

The underfire keeper advanced to the edge of his area to collect a misplaced pass, only to slip over.

He then instinctively grabbed the ball to prevent Dyer netting a simple second goal for the home side and was sent off by referee Scott Mathieson, after consultation with his assistant, for handling outside the area.

Emberson eventually left the field after protesting his

innocence over the marginal decision and Mark Ovendale was called off the bench with midfielder Steve Robinson sacrificed.

Kinnear opted to play a narrow three-man midfield of Spring, Nicholls and Paul Hughes, although striker Thorpe later dropped back into a more withdrawn left-midfield role.

Alan Neilson cleared Chris Morgan's shot off the line on 44 minutes before Ovendale had even made a save, but Spring equalised in spectacular fashion shortly afterwards.

Home keeper Andy Marriott had earlier made a routine stop from Steve Howard's shot on the turn, pushed behind a 25-yard drive from Ian Hillier and watched as Spring's flick with the outside of his boot trickled wide from close range.

But the Hatters had looked more likely to concede rather than score before Spring's pivotal contribution.

Spring dispossessed a careless Brian O'Callaghan after good work by Thorpe and then fired an unstoppable left-footed shot into Marriott's top corner.

His goal proved the catalyst for an inspired second-half display.

O'Callaghan was substituted at half-time by angry Barnsley boss Glyn Hodges but another example of suicidal defending gifted the Hatters a 50th-minute lead.

This time it was a case of "Let Me Entertain You" from Barnsley's very own Robbie Williams, who delighted the travelling army of fans behind the goal by repeating Coyne's earlier mistake.

Williams failed to cut out Ovendale's long kick, allowing an alert Thorpe to collect the ball, round Marriott and find the empty net.

Kevin Donovan blazed wildly over twice at the other end before Thorpe scored an excellently-crafted second goal on 64 minutes.



FLYING HIGH: Kevin Nicholls celebrates Tony Thorpe's first goal.

Picture: GARETH OWEN

The 28-year-old striker worked a wonderful one-two with Howard, who perfectly cushioned the ball into his striking partner's firing range with his chest.

Thorpe did the rest with Marriott unable to keep out his low shot from 10 yards.

The chance of Thorpe's first hat-trick since returning to Kenilworth Road then went begging when he fired across the face of goal two minutes later.

Barnsley, desperately short of confidence, were given an avenue back into the game on 75 minutes after a rash lunge by Neilson.

The experienced defender needlessly went to ground and hacked down Jones in the box and Dyer then sent Ovendale the wrong way from the penalty spot.

Williams' 30-yard drive whistled wide on 89 minutes and Ovendale made two routine saves from Jones and Lee Crooks as Barnsley slid to their sixth defeat in seven games.

Ovendale's handling and cross judgment was also impeccable for the Hatters as he staked a strong claim to stay in the side following Emberson's recent uncertain form.

Foley fires Hatters into cup's last 16

KEVIN FOLEY'S goal fired Hatters juniors into the last 16 of the FA Youth Cup.

John Moore's kids beat Bradford 1-0 at Kenilworth Road thanks to skipper Foley and now play host to Barnsley or Middlesbrough in the next round.

Hatters' striker Andrew Fotiadis did not travel to Barnsley with the first team on Saturday after a family bereavement.

matchfacts

BARNSELEY 2 LUTON 3

●BARNSELEY: Andy Marriott, Neil Austin, Chris Morgan, Brian O'Callaghan (Lee Crooks, 46), Robbie Williams, Kevin Donovan (Carl Barrowclough, 65), Steve Hayward, Gary Jones, Alex Neil (Rory Fallon, 65), Bruce Dyer, Kevin Betsy. Subs not used: Chris Lumsdon, Matthew Ghent.

●HATTERS: Carl Emberson, Ian Hillier, Alan Neilson, Chris Coyne, Alan Kimble, Steve Robinson (Mark Ovendale, 37), Kevin Nicholls, Matthew Spring,

Paul Hughes, Steve Howard, Tony Thorpe (Dean Crowe, 90). Subs not used: Michael Leary, Lee Mansell.

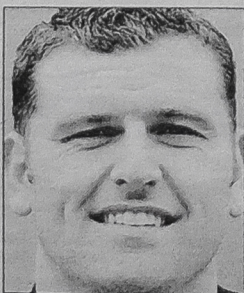
●Shots on target: Barnsley 9 Luton 5.

●Off target: Barnsley 8 Luton 3.

●Corners: Barnsley 4 Luton 3.

●Referee: Scott Mathieson (Cheshire).

●TOP HATTER: Tony Thorpe - displayed all his predatory instincts to grab two goals and give the Hatters' 10 men a commanding 3-1 lead. Also worked hard dropping back to the left side of midfield.



OFF: Carl Emberson.

playerwatch

KEEPER CARL EMBERSON IS IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

- Time on pitch: 36 minutes
- Shots saved: 1
- Shots on target: 2
- Shot/save ratio: 50 per cent
- Crosses caught: 3
- Crosses punched: 1
- Crosses dropped: 0
- Long kicks to own player: 6
- Long kicks to opposition: 6
- Long kick completion rate: 50 per cent
- Throws to own player: 1

Embers sees red at Oakwell

- Throws to opposition: 0
- Throw completion rate: 100 per cent
- Dribble ball retained: 1
- Dribble ball lost: 0
- Dribble completion rate: 100 per cent
- FINAL VERDICT: Carl Emberson suffered another disappointing afternoon at Barnsley. He was absolved of the blame for

Barnsley's opening goal after a communication mix-up with Chris Coyne and then made a fine save to deny Bruce Dyer before dealing with four crosses. But his slip on the edge of the box caused him to handle out of play and get sent off. The mistake could have proved more costly if not for a brilliant display by his team-mates.