

Ten-men jinx

Sorry Reds plunge into the drop zone as yet again they lose to team hit by red card

BARNSELEY 2 LUTON 3

Goals: Betsy (1), Dyer (75, pen) for Barnsley; Spring (44), Thorpe (50, 64) for Luton.

BARNSELEY: Marriott 6, Austin 6, Morgan 7, O'Callaghan 5, Williams 6, Donovan 7 (Barrowclough 64, 6), Hayward 6, Jones 7, Neil 6 (Fallon 64, 6), Dyer 6, Betsy 7. Unused subs: Lumsdon, Ghent.

LUTON: Emberson 5, Neilson 6, Coyne 6, Hillier 6 (Bayliss 75), Kimble 6, Hughes 7, Spring 8, Nicholls 7, Robinson 6 (Ovendale 36, 8), Thorpe 8, Howard 7. Subs: Ovendale, Bayliss, Leary, Mansell, Crowe.

Referee: Scott Mathieson (Cheshire).

Bookings: Jones, Betsy, Crooks, Barrowclough (Barnsley); Nicholls, Bayliss (Luton).

Sending-off: Emberson (Luton).

Attendance: 9,079.

By Simon Meeks

Barnsley

IT'S turning into the season Harry Potter couldn't put right.

At this rate, fast forward a dozen years and Barnsley v Hogwart's 2nd XI - pools panel verdict: Score draw.

Luton couldn't believe their 3-2 luck, the rest of us just couldn't believe it.

One-nil up and Luton go down to 10 with ref Scott Mathieson maybe figuring Barnsley need all the help they can get.

Except that Luton's secret weapon is to have a goal-keeper on the bench better than the one red-carded after 36 minutes for a catch outside the area.

Facing nine outfield players, as per usual Barnsley got spooked and then shafted.

A penalty 15 minutes from time put a better spin on it. Not much, though, as Luton went home six points off the play-offs and Barnsley dipped into the drop zone thanks to a -13 goal difference.

But at 3.01pm, even after Mansfield had won at Chesterfield pushing Barnsley to fourth from bottom, it was Barnsley party time. Luton keeper Carl Emberson and Chris Coyne caught the Oakwell bug of comic 'after you, mate' defending and Kevin Betsy

Brief highlights: Kevin Betsy celebrates his goal, right, and Bruce Dyer goes close with a shot, inset

charged through the bungling pair to score.

Gary Jones whacked a shot on to the post as Barnsley were boss.

Even the few fans who took part in the protest against owner Peter Doyle left their seats and nipped to the side of the stand, not wanting miss Barnsley's second goal.

Second best to that should have been Emberson's red card. In taking the ball off Bruce Dyer's head on the whitewash of the area, he did a bit of a swallow dive, the linesman flagged handball, the ref agreed. Tough luck on the lad and for midfield man Steve Robinson who went off as cover keeper Mark Ovendale went on.

Ovendale didn't put a hand or foot wrong for the rest of the afternoon.

Luton then rattled Barnsley with a goal a minute before the break, Matthew Spring curling one in from 25 yards after Brian O'Callaghan failed to clear.

Caretaker boss Glyn Hodges reckoned afterwards the writing was on the wall and elsewhere from then on in.

"To be fair, the writing was in the programme, I didn't realise until afterwards that Brian O'Callaghan has said that he likes to fanny around on the ball and be clever," he complained.

O'Callaghan, the subject of a two-page feature in the matchday magazine, was quoted: "I like playing football and at times I suppose I take a few risks, Managers don't always like the way I play and people have tried to change me but this is the way I am."

Bad move, Brian.

The way he was at half-time was out of the team as



Lee Crooks took over as second centre-back.

Five minutes later, 2-1. Robbie Williams, in at left-back for the crooked Paul Gibbs, got an assist for Barnsley's first goal and Luton's second. He had been pretty good until his header back dropped in front of keeper Andy Marriott and just nicely for striker Tony Thorpe to round Marriott and score.

Barnsley swept forward and were knocked back to

the point of no return as Thorpe and Steve Howard executed the perfect one-two on the area's fringe and Thorpe banged in his second.

Hodges threw on Rory Fallon and Carl Barrowclough but as good as it got was when Jones was upended by Ian Hillier and Dyer drilled in that penalty.

Hodges was left somewhere between angry and gutted. "The last three home games we've been 1-0 up and pummeling teams, their

equaliser was a great finish but it should have been dealt with," he said. "Don't give a mug a chance, unfortunately we did."

"I always thought we could pull it back, they were defending for their lives, but we shouldn't be in that position. Everytime we go against 10 men we lose."

I don't know what goes through their minds sometimes.

"They all talk the talk, but talk's cheap."