

Everything's o-Kay for Barnsley 03/04

Luton 0 Barnsley 1

BARNSELY'S Antony Kay grabbed a late winner at Luton to keep the Yorkshiremen's promotion challenge alive with a 1-0 win in a scrappy contest.

Kay bundled the ball home at the second attempt after Luton failed to deal with Steve Carson's corner to clinch a match they had shaded throughout.

Both sides seemed to have left their shooting boots at home and the best Luton could offer in the first half was a free kick from Steve Robinson that clipped the bar.

Barnsley created the better chances and were unlucky when Carson's volley cannoned off Emmerson Boyce for a corner.

Jonathan Walters brought the best out of Marlon Beresford with a clever chip that the keeper tipped over the crossbar.

Barnsley's Craig Ireland contrived to shoot over from two yards from another inswinging Carson corner before Beresford saved Steve Howard's free kick at the other end.

The big keeper then went full length to produce a one-handed save from a long-range piledriver by substitute Paul Warhurst.

The hosts looked jaded in the second half and could manage only a close-range effort from Lee Mansell and a Howard header.

Luton manager Mike Newell admitted Barnsley were worthy winners after watching his side go down by a single goal.

He said: "If you don't play well, it's very difficult to get a result.

"This was always going to be a tight game but over the 90 minutes Barnsley deserved to win it.

"We didn't cause them any problems in the first half, we had plenty of the game in the second but it wasn't going to be our day.

"We didn't play well and if you keep giving corners away like we did, sooner or later, you are going to pay.

"We have done well to be where we are. I think a top six position is a fair reflection of how we have performed until now.

"We have had a decent run and should be full of confidence but we didn't play with confidence against Barnsley."

Asked if his men felt under pressure having got into the play-off zone, he said: "Who knows?

"It didn't get to me when I was a player.

"I don't know what it is that causes lads to be off form on occasion. But this was only our second home defeat and it might be a wake-up call."

Barnsley manager Gudjon Thordarson said: "We deserved the win. We were the stronger side in the first half, although Luton came at us in the second.

"It was always going to be very, very tight and although we left it late, it doesn't matter when you score to win the game.

"I thought we could have done better in attack but you have no complaints when you get the three points."