



RITCHIE consoles Mannone

RITCHIE TO VETO HIS BLUNDER MAN VITO

04/07 Barnsley 1 Luton 2

By SARAH WINTERBURN

CALAMITY keeper Vito Mannone got no sympathy from Luton goal poacher Ahmet Brkovic after his blunder gifted the Hatters victory at Oakwell.

The 18-year-old Italian on loan from Arsenal cost the Tykes a point on his full debut when he dropped a high ball into the path of the Croat sub deep into injury-time.

The teenager was close to tears after his second cock-up in two games for Barnsley and could be axed boss Andy Ritchie. And Brkovic was offering precious little comfort.

"Do I have any sympathy? Not really," admitted Brkovic. "I wish there were more goalkeepers making mistakes like these so I can come in and score the tap-ins.

"He's a young player and this is how he's going to learn. It's a hard lesson but sometimes the hard lessons are the best lessons."

You can hardly blame the Luton winger for being selfish. It was his first goal of a season in which boss Mike Newell has left him warming the bench.

Devastated

Brkovic added: "It's been frustrating. I've been patient, waited for my chance and then took it.

"It's my lucky ground. Two years ago I came off the bench, scored a header that kickstarted my season and scored 16 goals. I hope history repeats itself."

Barnsley were fortunate not to lose by a greater margin after Rowan Vine missed three gilt-edged chances in the second half.

It was a different tale in the first half, with Lewis Emmanuel clearing off the line from Brian Howard, who tore Luton's defence apart along with Martin Devaney and Martin McIndoe.

Carlos Edwards put Newell's men in front in the 47th minute, turning on the edge of the box and firing into the top corner.

But 60 seconds later Howard charged unchallenged from the half-way line and poked the ball past Marlon Beresford.

The Hatters then took the game by the scruff of the neck but failed to hit the target until Mannone gave them the game wrapped in a pretty bow.

Howard said: "We're devastated. To lose like that is hard to take. He's only a kid and I'm sure he'll bounce back."