

YOU CAN GET OVER LUTON BOOB, VITO

By ALAN BIGGS

VITO MANNONE, the calamity-struck youngster in the Barnsley goal, has received a heartfelt message of support from the keeper who was at the other end when he gifted Luton three points last week.

Marlon Beresford, himself a former Barnsley keeper, was as stunned as anyone at Mannone, on loan from Arsenal, letting slip a harmless cross for Ahmet Brkovic to inflict a stoppage-time defeat.

But Beresford's initial delight was tempered with genuine sympathy for the teenager who, he reveals, broke down in tears on the pitch after his second costly clanger in two matches.

Eight days earlier, pressed into a debut from the bench at Deepdale after Nick Colgan had been sent off, the 18-year-old made an ill-judged punch and the ball rebounded in off Patrick Agyemang for Preston's winner.

Mannone's first appearance at Oakwell was an even more harrow-

Beresford backs Tykes' distraught goalkeeper

ing experience and Beresford knows from his own experience that the psychological damage can be acute.

But the veteran Luton keeper, who, at 37, is more than twice Mannone's age, told *The League Paper*: "I'm at the other end of my career and something like that probably affects you twice as much when you are a young lad.

"I tried to go and have a word with him at the end, but he was already being consoled by players from both sides. Vito was having a hard time and he was in tears, according to our lads.

"But you don't come from a club like Arsenal without having huge potential and I don't see why he can't go on to have a good career.

"I thought he did well overall in last week's match and that's why I

was surprised as anyone about his mistake.

"It seemed a bread-and-butter ball into the box from our left-back, he came to take it and the ball slipped through his hands. There's no other way to describe it, because there didn't seem to be any pressure on the lad.

"Obviously we were both delighted and grateful that he dropped it, although, as a keeper myself, I can sympathise more than anybody."

Beresford, who has made 16 moves in a journeyman career, added: "We all make mistakes. I know I've made stacks, so I can relate to what happened to Vito.

"Only the other week I spilled a low ball into our box at home to Stoke and Luke Chadwick put it in the net. We were 2-1 up at the time

and ended by drawing 2-2, so it was a case of gifting them a point."

Colgan will be back between the posts for Barnsley's local derby at Sheffield Wednesday next week, but Beresford believes Mannone has the ideal man to help him through a crisis in former Arsenal and Leeds keeper John Lukic.

"John, who I know from my time at Oakwell, coaches the keepers there and he'll put Vito right with some wise words," he said.

"It's a learning curve for him, but he has such a good pedigree, I'm sure he'll pick himself up.

"Obviously the fans weren't happy with what he did last week, but the lad deserves his chance. I'm sure they'll give him support."

Midfielder Brian Howard, whose equaliser was wiped out by former Atalanta keeper Mannone's blunder, said: "Vito has to be a good player when you consider that

Arsène Wenger signed him. I'm sure he'll bounce back."

Barnsley themselves are in recovery mode after two successive defeats, but Andy Ritchie's side have proved a match for most opposition in the Championship.



HARD LUCK: Boss Andy Ritchie consoles Vito Mannone

PICTURE: Keith Turner