



LUTON TOWN 2

Kroca 22, Barnes-Homer 88

ALTRINCHAM 1

Reeves 70



10/11

LATE SHOW

RISE STAR:
Zdenek Kroca
gives Luton the
lead
PICTURES: Gareth Owen



Money delighted with Matt's finish

RICHARD MONEY was a happy manager after his side bounced back from conceding an equaliser after Altrincham sub Michael Welch set up Damian Reeves within seconds of his arrival.

The Luton boss said: "The opening day of the season is

What they said...

always difficult. Everyone is full of optimism and we knew how Altrincham would set up.

"Fair play to them. I thought they defended well and stuck at it, got tight with us all over the pitch.

"They put the big boy Welch on and all of a sudden they've got several 6ft 2in people in the box. If they produce a good delivery, which they did, it can happen.

"We stayed patient, created numerous chances and in the end Matthew's come

up with a wonderful strike.

"There's a real belief in the group that we can have a good challenge this year.

"Competition for places is very heart-warming. It's nice when you can sit on the bench and replace players with Claude Gnaka, Danny Crow and Tom Craddock."

SEES TOWN TO VICTORY



By Stuart Hammonds

LUTON boss Richard Money hailed Matthew Barnes-Homer and debutant Andy Drury for helping force the title favourites past obstinate Altrincham.

The Hatters left it late, with Barnes-Homer's stunning winner coming with just two minutes of normal time remaining.

The natives - notorious for becoming restless when the Blue Square Bet Premier's lesser lights come to Kenilworth Road and park the bus - were rewarded for their patience, knowing their team had failed to score from open play in four previous meetings with Graham Heathcote's men.

Town's failure to build on a first-half lead given them by Czech debutant Zdenek Kroca looked like being their downfall, especially when Damian Reeves headed in a 69th-minute equaliser.

But Barnes-Homer's 20-yard strike got their season off and running, and Money said: "If anyone deserved a goal today it was Barnes-Homer."

"His centre-forward play was of the highest order. He did everything that the team needed of him."

"In the end he's come up with a good strike and it's gone in. I'm really pleased for him but obviously pleased for the team and the supporters as well."

"They stayed with us to the 95th minute. I think they'd all agree they've seen an absolutely fantastic



MONEY MAN: Luton's Matthew Barnes-Homer was in top form

performance from their players."

If it appeared like a training game at times, Money's team certainly moved the ball and then themselves with energy and desire to get the maximum out of the afternoon's exercise.

The outstanding performance came from winger Drury, starting on the right and finishing on the left having stayed down a division following last season's championship success with Stevenage.

He had had already tested Robins keeper Stuart Coburn with a volley before the opener, and it was his slide-rule pass for Jake Howells that resulted in a set-piece opportunity for Keith Keane to deliver for Kroca.

In the second half Drury's cross-

ing created opportunities for Howells, Kroca and then Kevin Gallen, who should have done better with a 57th-minute header that flew wide of the near post.

Reeves, making his Alty bow after signing from Bradford Park Avenue, grabbed the equaliser with the visitors' only attempt on target from their first corner in the 69th minute.

They may have offered little in an attacking sense, but Heathcote's team are always organised enough, despite their part-time status, to frustrate the top teams. A centre-half thrown on as a striking substitute always helps, and it was Michael Welch's header that set Reeves up.

Drury continued to prompt,

teeing up substitutes Claude Gnaka and Danny Crow before the winner, and then wasting the opportunity to make it three in injury-time, choosing to square across the six-yard box after Adam Murray played him in.

"I've got one comment to make about Andy Drury," said Money. "What is he doing playing at this level? Where has he been all his life? The boy has so much quality it's unreal. We are just very, very grateful that we've got him."

The answer to his second question is that Drury has been stuck in Non-League, working his way up from Sittingbourne to Gravesend & Northfleet (now Ebbsfleet) and then back down to Lewes while working on a building site.

MATCH STATS

LUTON v ALTRINCHAM

8	SHOTS ON TARGET	1
7	SHOTS OFF TARGET	2
10	CORNERS	1
3	OFFSIDE	2
12	FOULS CONCEDED	10
1	YELLOW CARDS	2
0	RED CARDS	0

STAR MAN: Drury (Luton)
ATE: 6,665

ENTERTAINMENT: ★★★★★

REF RATING: M Thompson 8/10

LUTON: 4-4-2: Tyler 6, Gleeson 7, Kroca 7, Pilkington 7, Murray 7, Drury 9, Murray 7, Keane 7, Howells 7 (Drakeley 75, St. Gallen 6 (Crow 74, 5), Barnes-Homer 8 (Craddock 90+4, 5). Subs not used: Blackett, Pilkington.
ALTRINCHAM: 3-5-2: Coburn 6, Williams 7, Smith 7, Joseph 7, Densmore 7, Lawton 6, Claryk 5 (Holmes 59, 6), Brown 6, Cle 6 (Welch 69, 6), Johnson 5 (Denham 59), Reeves 7. Subs not used: McCready, Coates.