

Barnes-Homer is delighted to get 90 minutes under his belt

Striker hopes he's grabbed his chance

by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier
Histon 0 (0) Luton Town 4 (2)

HARD-tough striker Matthew Barnes-Homer admitted he was disappointed to bag just two goals on his return to the Hatters first team as they battered already-relegated Histon 4-0 at the Glass-world Stadium on Monday.

Town all but sealed third spot thanks to Barnes-Homer's double and goals from Amari Morgan-Smith and Claude Gnackpa as the play-off contenders were confirmed.

One worrying fact though was that Morgan-Smith seemed to be troubled by his breathing and was taken to hospital after being withdrawn in the second half.

Barnes-Homer was pleased to be back playing though after being in and out of the team and said: "It's just good to get 90 minutes under my belt.

"The gaffer has taken me out and given some other players a chance and they've been firing.

"I've just taken that (my chance) and luckily I've got two goals.

"I was a bit disappointed I didn't get three or four but it was good to get on the scoresheet.

"It's a good result for the boys, carrying on from the other day winning 3-0. It was good to back that up.

"We rested a few players and the players that had in had to do a job and they did that."

The 25-year-old striker asserted that Luton still had to play well to score four goals despite the fact the Stutes were already down.

He added: "It's what you have to do.



"Even though they are down at the bottom end of the table they are still playing for pride.

"It's still tough to score that amount of goals against a team at the bottom. You still have to be professional."

Town made seven changes from the side that saw off Eastbourne 3-0 at Kemilworth Road on Saturday, bringing in Kevin Pilkington, Adam Newton, Morgan-Smith, Barnes-Homer, Ed Asafu-Adjaye, against the club he was recently on loan at, Kevin Carden and Luke Graham.

The Stutes were quickest to adapt to the bone hard pitch and swirling wind as Daniel Sparkes' long range drive was well held by Pilkington on seven minutes.

But Town produced a lovely free-flowing move after a Histon error to break the deadlock on 12 minutes.

Morgan-Smith seized on Lee Smith's misplaced pass and a slick interchange between Barnes-Homer and Alex Lawless left Morgan-Smith one-on-one

with keeper Wes Forderingham.

The on-loan Crystal Palace stopper pulled off a great low save to turn the ball on to the bar, but it span in despite the best efforts of Jim Stevenson to clear on the line.

Undeterred, Histon kept plugging away. Zak Mills' long-range effort flying just wide and Smith forcing a good low save out of Pilkington.

Morgan-Smith saw a fine effort deflected behind before Town deservedly doubled their lead on 35 minutes as the attacker's centre was well won in the air by Barnes-Homer.

As the Stutes' static defence failed to react, Barnes-Homer kept his composure to volley home from close range.

Histon threatened intermittently while Asafu-Adjaye's overlapping run and cross a minute before the break was almost fumbled into his own net by Forderingham and Morgan-Smith had a sharp effort that forced a great one-handed save from the Histon



ALL ACTION: Kevin Pilkington saves on Monday, left, and Matthew Barnes-Homer celebrates a goal earlier in the season, above keeper.

Gnackpa replaced the quiet Robbie Willmott at the break and made an instant impact when he headed home Lawless' corner in off the bar with his first touch little more than a minute after his introduction.

Omer Riza was allowed a clear run on goal but got the ball stuck under his feet before getting a shot away that was well blocked by Graham, Barnes-Homer and Riza exchanged efforts before Gnackpa proceeded to roll out the party pieces at will and had a close-range blast deflected clear.

Histon had their best chance of the day on 71 minutes when Remy Clerima could only direct a tame header straight at Pilkington from a corner, while only a great last-ditch tackle from Asafu-Adjaye denied Stevenson a goal.

Pilkington stood tall to deny Smith from Antonio Murray's curling cross, Barnes-Homer sent a header over and substitute Jason Walker threatened before Gnackpa was lucky to escape a red card.

Having been wrestled to the floor by Mills, Gnackpa appeared to lower his head towards the defender when trying to get up, but referee S Long seemed unperturbed.

Luton capped a comprehensive win in the third minute of stoppage time when Barnes-Homer swivelled on the edge of the area and let fly into the bottom left-hand corner to notch his 19th goal of the season.