

Town title hopes are dead and Barrow-ed

Pilkington takes up County role

HATTERS: Goalkeeper Kevin Pilkington has hung up his gloves and left Kenilworth Road to become the new goalkeeping coach at League One side Notts County.

The 37-year-old signed for Luton permanently in 2010 and made 33 appearances during his time at the club, including 15 this year.

He was first choice up until the 0-0 draw with Mansfield Town recently, but told the official website that the move back to a club he played almost 150 times for, was too good to turn down.

Pilkington said: "I'm gutted to be leaving Luton and I'm gutted as I'm giving up playing too.

"However, I'm not getting any younger, and this is a great opportunity for me to further my career. It's the next step for me and hopefully the first step on the ladder in this new chapter of my career.

"The years really have flown by and I've got a lot of great memories but it's time to move on now. I'm a coach, it's my future.

"I've got some great memories of my time at Luton and I'd like to thank those who brought me here.

"I'm sad to be leaving, it's a great club with some super people and the lads have been brilliant."

Town boss Gary Brabin added: "We're sad to see him leave because he's been such an important member of the squad for the past few seasons - not only in terms of his performances on the pitch but his experience, know-how and character around the place.

"Kevin has always been keen on taking up coaching full-time and he feels that this offer - at a club close to his heart - is ideal for him."

by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier

Barrow 1 (0) Luton Town 0 (0)

TOWN'S hopes of promotion fell flat as a pancake as they lost 1-0 to Barrow on a wretched evening in the north west last night.

Victories for the top two of Fleetwood and Wrexham look to have all but killed off Luton's automatic promotion hopes, while Alex-Ray Harvey's late second half strike vanquished Hatters on as Barrow beat them for the first-ever time in the Conference, ending Town's 13-match unbeaten league run.

Before kick off, Luton's directors handed out scarves to the 70 travelling supporters who had made the mammoth journey to Holker Street where the crowd of 925 was Barrow's lowest of the season.

Town made two changes from the team that beat Tamworth 3-0 at Kenilworth Road on Saturday.

Right-back Curtis Osano was ruled out through injury and John Paul Kissock dropped to the bench as in came Keith Keane at full-back with Craig McAllister leading the line.

Young keeper Lewis Kidd, meanwhile, was named on the bench following the shock retirement of Kevin Pilkington.

Hatters started with a strong wind at their backs and McAllister turned well in the opening moments but dragged his effort wide, while a flowing move saw Aaron O'Connor have his shot deflected over.

The conditions were having a telling influence on the game and Luton had another opportunity on

Photo by Jane Russell



STRIKING BERTH: Craig McAllister started alongside Stuart Fleetwood but couldn't net his first Luton goal during last night's 1-0 defeat at Barrow

10 minutes when McAllister burst on to Janos Kovacs' ball over the top but he could roll tamely at Shaun Pearson.

A Keane cross was then headed goalwards by McAllister but it was again too easy for Pearson, before the Hatters should have taken the lead on 20 minutes.

A good passing move ended in Greg Taylor picking out O'Connor in the six yard box but he could only glance his header straight at the keeper.

The tackles began to fly in midway through the half as the game developed some bite, while O'Connor and Stuart Fleetwood combined well on 25 minutes but Jake Howells was just unable to

get on the end of the cross.

In a scrappy half, Luton were the only ones playing with any real quality as McAllister was just unable to connect with a hanging Howells cross.

The Bluebirds finally threatened after half an hour. Jack Mackreth having his effort blocked and the lively Richie Baker firing straight at Mark Tyler.

Another good chance went begging for the visitors 10 minutes before the break when O'Connor's flick fell for McAllister, but the target man blasted wide of the mark.

With the wind at their backs Barrow looked a different side in the second half.

Andy Cook robbed Kovacs five

minutes in but flashed wide when he should have found the net.

O'Connor had shouts for a penalty turned down just past the hour as the game continued to simmer, but there was little quality on a dreadful night.

Referee S Duncan was struggling to keep control of the game and Mackreth almost unlocked the Luton defence when he got in behind on 71 minutes, but his low cross went begging.

Accustomed to the conditions the hosts finally made the breakthrough two minutes later when the ball was pulled back to Harvey and his low shot crept inside the far post.

Substitute Kissock almost threaded Fleetwood through but he was just beaten to it by the keeper.

Town pushed for an equaliser as Kissock's low free-kick was straight into Pearson's midriff with two minutes to go.

The Bluebirds almost added a second in the last minute when Paul Rutherford wriggled free on the left and Cook would have found the bottom corner but for a combination of Tyler and the post.

Both sides squared up in the second minute of injury time and the final whistle soon followed as the Bluebirds' victory was given a rapturous reception by the gleeful home supporters.

Hatters: Mark Tyler, Greg Taylor, Keith Keane, George Pilkington (C), Alex Lawless, Craig McAllister (John-Paul Kissock 80), Stuart Fleetwood, Aaron O'Connor, Jake Howells, Andre Boucaud (Adam Watkins 63), Janos Kovacs. **Substitutes not used:** Lewis Kidd, Danny Crow, Shane Blackett.

Bookings: Kovacs 30, Boucaud 56, Fleetwood 61.

Attendance: 925 (Hatters 70).

Star Hatter: Greg Taylor.