

Analysis of Barnsley's 2-2 draw at Wycombe Wanderers. Reyes Cleary and Davis Keillor-Dunn put the visitors 2-0 up but the hosts scored in the 88th and 93rd minutes.

REDS INEXPLICABLY THROW AWAY TWO POINTS

WHEN Alex Lowry's long-range shot nestled in the bottom right corner of Barnsley's net on 93 minutes, Conor Hourihane stood completely still in the dugout other than raising both hands to his face.

He looked several shades redder when he turned around to face his bench, who he had surely expected to be celebrating with when 2-0 up on 88 minutes.

After the final whistle, he held his fingers to his forehead and grimaced as if afflicted by a migraine while walking towards the away end from where there had been boos before some claps in response to the head coach's applause. His players trudged off with indignant stunted expression on their faces.

Hourihane admitted after the game he was in shock that his side had drawn a match in which they had been under almost no pressure for 87 minutes.

Although the point - which might have been considered an adequate result at the start of the day - ended a four-game losing run, it certainly felt like a defeat.

Seventeen points from the opening ten games is a decent start but the recent results have been disappointing.

Barnsley have played Blackpool who were second-bottom, Port Vale who were 19th, and Wycombe who were 20th but taken just one point. Their inability to keep clean sheets and avoid late goals are big issues. They now have a two-week international break to learn from this poor sequence and attack three consecutive Yorkshire derbies, but those last ten minutes in Wycombe will sting for a while.

LATE GOALS STILL HURTING REDS

For 87 minutes, Barnsley defended well. Although they were not put under much pressure by an underwhelming Wycombe attack, the Reds just made sensible decisions with clearances, timed tackles well and headed out set pieces and crosses while they blocked a series of long-range shots.

They looked likely to keep just their second clean sheet of the season, with their former prolific striker Cauley Woodrow having a quiet game then coming off.

But the first real time an attacker ran at them with pace in a dangerous area, impressive half-time substitute Donnell McNeilly easily beat Josh Earl to set up a tap-in for the unmarked Sam Bell. Barnsley suddenly looked rattled and could not get out of their half, conceding a series of set pieces - leading to Lowry's goal which former Wycombe youth player Murphy Cooper may feel he could have kept out even though it came through a crowd of bodies.

The Reds have conceded as many goals after 75 minutes in games this season as in the first hour while they are fourth in the first half table and 20th for after the break. They have conceded the final goal in seven games in a row.

Conceding late goals was an issue last season as well and one which Hourihane has been unable to solve as yet. It hints at a mental weakness and there seemed to be a lack of leadership and game management at 2-1.

Hourihane received criticism from some fans for bringing on players like Neil Farrugia and then Jon Russell but - even though the former dived into a typical unsuccessful tackle before the first goal - neither was directly responsible for the late strikes. Plus the head coach was

limited in who he could bring on with David McGoldrick on the bench but injured, with no other attacking options he trusts.

CLEARY EXCELLENT ON FULL DEBUT

Wycombe right-back Fin Back is the son of Rugby World Cup winner Neil Back. When trying to defend against Reyes Cleary for Barnsley's second goal, it was reminiscent of his father being famously flattened by Jonah Lomu in the 1995 World Cup.

He could not cope with Cleary's strength to win what looked like an aimless ball down the left or skill to skip past him and was left staggering and slipping after being beaten. The ball was in the net a few seconds later.

Cleary - on his full league debut - had earlier scored his first league goal for the Reds.

He once again showed skilful and pacy wing play as well as end product, adding flair and cutting edge to what had become a pedestrian and predictable Barnsley attack in the last few games with striker McGoldrick on the left. He also made the most tackles of any Reds player, including one for his goal, before coming off with cramp.

The other scorer was Davis Keillor-Dunn who netted his seventh of the season in all competitions, following that Cleary run. He also played some excellent passes.

REDS EDGE POOR GAME UNTIL END

This was not a classic game, with neither side at their best in very windy conditions.

But Barnsley edged the majority of it.

They were much better in an attacking sense than they have been recently with more shots on target than in the previous four matches combined.

They played almost a 4-2-2-2 in possession with Cleary pushing up next to Keillor-Dunn up front while Caylan Vickers moved from the right wing to the left of two attacking midfielders next to Adam Phillips.

Wycombe had eight points from ten games and were outside the relegation zone on goal difference, although many expect them to improve under former Reds boss Michael Duff.

The hosts were terrible for 87 minutes, having no shots on target and only one chance.

Other than Cleary, the other source of Barnsley chances was defender Connor Taylor inexplicably gifting the Reds two one-on-one opportunities in the first half.

They changed from Duff's usual 3-5-2 to a back four to try control Barnsley but it was not systems that got them back into the game, just the Reds' fragility late on.

SOME DECENT PERFORMANCES

There were some decent performances for the Reds.

Jono Bland responded very well from his midweek red card and public dressing down from Hourihane with a mature, disciplined and confident display. Having done well on and off the ball - and hit the left post for a third time this season - he came off on 83 minutes then must have watched what happened next in disbelief.

Connell made some good passes but also fired a few straight out of play.

Phillips registered his third assist of the season but, for him and Vickers, it was more an afternoon of perspiration than inspiration.

Tennai Watson won eight headers in a determined performance at right-back while, on the other side, Nathanael Ogbeta was required to attack a lot less due to Cleary's excellence. Ogbeta, like centre-backs Earl and Jack Shepherd, defended well until the late collapse in which they could have done better for the goals.