

Bonnyrigg Rose stalwart stays positive ahead of trip to bottom-markers Albion Rovers

Neil Martyniuk has gone down in Bonnyrigg Rose folklore for his crucial penalty in the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) play-off final, second-leg, at Central Park, Cowdenbeath, to secure a 1-0 victory. The goal sent supporters wild.

On Saturday, at New Dundas Park, he coolly slotted from the penalty spot against The Warriors from Ochilview Park but, unfortunately, it did not eventually produce a win against Stenhousemir that the passionate home fans were seeking.

It did however provide the red and white hoops with a lifeline to reduce the deficit to 3-2 against well-organised Stenhousemuir in a cinch Second Division clash. However, the home side lost a fourth on a breakaway in the dying seconds to produce a 4-2 defeat.

Martyniuk remains up-beat ahead of two critical games in the cinch Scottish League Division Two despite a run of three confidence-sapping defeats for newcomers Rose.

The Midlothian combine have slipped to seventh position in the ten-strong league. On Saturday, Rose travel to bottom-markers Albion Rovers (15.00) and on Tuesday they entertain second-bottom Annan Athletic in a re-arranged match (19.45) following a postponement earlier this term.

Misfiring Rovers have only won one and drawn two of their eight league games, losing five, and have shipped 11 goals and scored seven. They have collected five points.

Ninth-placed Annan have won two and drawn two of their eight

fixtures, losing four, scoring ten goals and letting-in 18, for eight points.

The 26-year-old defender, who has been with the club since 2017, after joining from near-neighbours, Newtongrange Star, admitted Rose lost poor goals in last Saturday's home defeat to Stenny.

But the left-sided defender, who has progressed from Junior football to the East of Scotland League and the Lowland League to the (SPFL) 2, added: "The dressing-room is not down. We are a close unit and we stick together. This is the first rut we've really been in and I've been at the club six seasons. Last week (against Dumbarton away 1-0) was the first time we've lost two in a row.

"Obviously, we've now lost a third, but that proves we are used to winning, so we just need to stick together and come into training Tuesday and Thursday and work hard."

The player added: "The story of our day (against Stenhousemuir) was losing poor goals and it is hard when you go 1-0 down early on. The first goal is so important and we are starting to learn that."

He admitted that heads were down when the squad returned to the dressing-room at New Dundas Park at the break on Saturday, but the left-sided defender said: "In the second-half we came out and had a better go at them (Stenhousemuir) and showed more intensity. They were, however, better defensively than us and better going forward than us and we need to go away and work on things.

"What is important for me is the goals we are conceding. I am a big part in that and we pride ourselves on being solid at the back and being able to build from there, but on Saturday, and in the last couple of weeks, we have been conceding."

Saturday would be an ideal opportunity to bounce back and

provide fans with a real lift ahead of Tuesday's home clash.

PICTURE: Rose warming-up before the game against Stenhousemuir at New Dundas Park