

Halom fails in bid to boost sad Luton

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LUTON 0 SWINDON 0: by PHILIP OSBORN

VIC HALOM, the £30,000 striker bought last month to inject more power into Luton's goal-shy attack, was withdrawn 14 minutes from the end of this frustrating stalemate.

It was a brave move by manager Alec Stock to break a tedious deadlock. But, like the rest of Luton's efforts, it failed.

And no one could blame the fans for slow handclapping as the home side stuttered to their eighth draw in 11 games.

Swindon, with eight and nine men occupied in defence most of the time, produced signs of attacking flair for only a brief spell at the start of the second half.

Peter Anderson was the only man who looked capable of piercing Swindon's protective covering.

But the Luton winger wasted the game's first real chance in the 14th minute. Cutting into the middle of the Swindon penalty area he delayed his shot long enough for Dave Thomas to rob him with a superb sliding tackle.

Luton appealed for a penalty, but I thought Stafford referee Robert Perkin was right to reject it.

Little was seen of the Swindon attack even though Dave Mackay had been switched from his normal defensive spot to a more creative role.

The veteran Scottish warrior's lack of pace made it easy for Luton's Alan Slough and Mike Keen to control the midfield.

But in a rare breakaway Don Rogers was presented with a 23rd-minute chance to give Swindon a shock lead. He scorched on to an Arthur Horsfield pass—but then blazed wildly over with only Luton 'keeper Keith Barber to beat.

HEADER

Anderson gave Welsh international Thomas a worrying time and was only just off target with a header from a Keen-inspired raid.

Then with another fine individual burst the winger powered a low shot only inches wide of a post.

Keen, always strong and effective, almost caught Peter Downsborough by surprise with a cleverly flighted free kick from 25 yards. It needed a super stretch by the 'keeper to tip the ball over.

Swindon had to re-organise after half time when Frank Burrows, who had received an ankle injury in the fifth minute, failed to reappear.

Stan Harland, a valiant worker throughout, switched to pivot with Mackay reverting to defence. And substitute Chris Jones almost set up a goal in the 51st minute. He found Rogers whose cross presented Peter Noble with a clear opening. But Noble's shot was blocked by Don Shanks who had recovered superbly.

After that the game dwindled into lethargy as Swindon, excellently served by Harland, John Trollope and Joe Butler smothered all Luton's efforts.