

Late leveller is a sickener

HUDDERSFIELD 1 HATTERS 1

A LATE, late leveller from Luke Beckett denied Hatters three points at Huddersfield and ruined Steve Robinson's ton-up milestone at the weekend.

Ahmet Brkovic's 11th goal of the season looked to have given Hatters the win at the Galpharm Stadium on Saturday.

But Beckett's clever lob in the fifth minute of added on time gave the Terriers a point and left Hatters fuming.

As well as questioning where referee Mick Thorpe had found the injury time from, Luton were left bewildered by a host of bizarre decisions from the match officials throughout the game.

Robinson himself, who was making his 100th Luton appearance in all competitions, was staggered to see a strong penalty claim turned down in the second-half.

The 30-year-old Irishman told The News-Gazette: "Some of the decision that were made on Saturday, I've never seen anything like it before in all my time in football.

"Both sides were getting things awarded against them and at one stage me and Nico were standing there in the middle just laughing at what was going on. There was so much petty stuff and in the end that was what cost us.

"The lads were absolutely gutted after the game because we felt we'd done enough. We went there with a game plan to frustrate them and hit them on the break and it seemed to have worked.

"But it wasn't just the late goal the lads were annoyed with, we had two penalty appeals turned down on myself and Stevie (Howard). For my one, the ref said he never touched me, but I've got the marks to prove he did."

On notching up his 100th run out for

Robbo penalty fury on 100th Hatters match

the Hatters, Robinson said: "It's not something I'd thought about and I didn't know anything about it to be honest.

"But it's nice to get to that figure, particularly when I was told I wasn't going to be able to play again last season.

"It's not something that you really look out for though and I'll just be concentrating on a big game against Hull on Saturday."

Hatters showed just one change to the 11 that drew with Tranmere on Saturday with Russ Perrett stepping up for only his third Town start of the season in place of the suspended Chris Coyne.

The hosts edged the opening exchanges, but only after Howard's fifth minute penalty shout following great work from Kevin Nicholls on the left.

Andy Booth went close with a header and volley, Beckett threatened with a mis-hit shot and Kevin Foley and Perrett both produced late saving challenges.

But it was Luton who scored from their only shot on target in the entire game 11 minutes before the break when Foley linked up with Howard and crossed for Brkovic to prod home from close range.

Rob Edwards hit the side netting in the 69th minute and Beresford blocked superbly from Beckett in the 85th minute before the striker produced his late drama, chipping home after a long punt into the box dropped to his feet on the edge of the penalty area.



LOOKING UP: Kevin Foley challenges David Mirfin during Saturday's draw.

MIKE NEWELL'S VERDICT



"IT'S frustrating to concede a goal so late on because we felt we had done enough to win it.

"That was something from last season when we were conceding last minute goals whereas this season we've been scoring more in the last 10 minutes of games so it was disappointing because we thought we'd tied the match up.

"We didn't make the

late substitutions to break the game up. Neilson came on because Brkovic couldn't continue and Calvin is good in the air so we put him on because we knew they'd throw the ball into the box at the end.

"We were pleased with the way the lads played overall, but we weren't pleased with the amount of chances we created for the play that we had."

STAR HATTER



KEVIN FOLEY: Hatters' promising 20-year-old has been given the chance to show his attacking flair in recent weeks after seeing Keith Keane drop to right-back.

And Foley looked lively on the break for Luton against Huddersfield without neglecting his defensive duties when required.

As well as setting up Brkovic for Luton's goal, Foley also made a superb saving header to deny Danny Schofield in the first-half.

Newell backs missing Howie

STEVE HOWARD has been defended by Luton boss Mike Newell after picking up his 10th booking of the season in the 1-1 draw at Huddersfield.

Howard was cautioned 12 minutes from time at the Galpharm Stadium for persistent infringements and will now miss the top-of-the-table clash

with Hull on Saturday and the trip to his former club Hartlepool United on Tuesday night.

But Newell said: "The referee said it was for persistent fouling and he seems to get booked for that every week while nothing happens to the people he's competing against.

"He's frustrated with the way things are going at the moment

and I'm just as frustrated for him. The game's becoming a non-contact sport because of the influx of foreign players in our game who go down at the slightest touch.

"Howie came off at half-time and said 'the ref's going to book me today'.

"He just doesn't know what to do about it."