

Boucaud thought he had won it for Luton

by Mark Wood

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Blue Square Bet Premier

Alfreton Town 0 (0) Luton Town 0 (0)

DISMAYED midfielder Andre Boucaud thought he had bagged the Hatters an injury-time winner as they were held to a goalless draw at Alfreton on Saturday.

The second half substitute was denied a first-ever headed goal as his attempt was hacked off the line in the 93rd-minute.

Boucaud said: "I thought it was in, I got up, headed it on target and hoped for the best and the guy got the clearance off the line.

"But it's just one of them things. We've just got to take it into the next game and hopefully we can create that and put it away.

"I don't think I've had one (a headed goal), even when the ball's coming over to me I'm thinking in my head, I've got to score here!

"I had peeled off, but it was great vision from Janos Kovacs and I've just tried to head it back across the keeper and the player has stuck out a leg and cleared it off the line.

"We are creating the chances which is the main thing and hopefully we can put them away."

Luton had played well in the first half but missed numerous chances, with Andre Gray particularly culpable. The Hatters then had to stand firm in the second period as their hosts put them under relentless pressure.

The recent signing from York continued: "I thought we had enough chances to win the game.

"We've just got to take the positives out of it and take it into Tuesday."

It was also the first time that Boucaud had been part of a triple change, including Dan Gleeson and Aaron O'Connor, adding: "I think the gaffer thought we need-



SO CLOSE: Andre Boucaud is about to see his last-gasp effort at Alfreton cleared off the line

Picture by Marcus Myers

ed a little change, a little spark, and hopefully we came on and created a few chances."

An unchanged Luton side were inches away from taking the lead on 10 minutes when Janos Kovacs led the charge from the back.

His pass found Stuart Fleetwood on the left who whistled a curling 20-yard effort just wide.

Alfreton responded as Adam Cunnington fired straight into Mark Tyler's midriff.

Town began to dominate possession, while the Reds looked dangerous from set-pieces with Josh Law curling a well-placed free-kick just over on 26 minutes.

A purple patch then saw the Hatters carve Alfreton open four times in quick succession.

First Gray forced a stop out of Jon Stewart from a narrow angle before Keith Keane's marauding run through the middle provided Gray with another great opportunity, but he dragged his shot across the face of goal.

The best chance then fell to Gray once more on 29 minutes when he outmuscled Connor

Franklin to get on to Law's mis-kicked clearance but, with just Stewart to beat, he thundered against the outside of the post.

More good play then saw Keane thread Gray away down the right but his cross was too far ahead of Fleetwood.

Nathan Arnold tamely tumbled under a Kovacs challenge in the box, but nothing was doing while Anton Brown had an effort deflected behind.

Town attacked straight from the restart with Godfrey Poku spiralling over a good chance and at the other end, Jake Howells thwarted Law.

Alfreton should have made hay on 54 minutes when Daniel Meadow robbed the lax Curtis Osano and cut inside, but thrashed over the bar with Tyler to beat.

A triple substitution on the hour failed to galvanise Luton as the Reds continued to boss the game.

Arnold almost crept in but was denied by a combination of Tyler, Kovacs and Dan Gleeson before Luton had good claims for a pen-

alty waved away from a corner as George Pilkington seemed to be felled by Darran Kempson.

With free-kick after free-kick going the way of the hosts, Luton were given a massive let-off on 68 minutes when the unmarked Nathan Jarman sent his header against the upright.

Jarman wasted another great chance with 16 minutes to go as his shot squirmed wide.

Kovacs was grounded by what appeared to be an elbow to the head before getting booked by another referee that looked hopelessly out of his depth.

Town were again being bullied out of the encounter, but had penalty appeals for handball turned down on 88 minutes when Gray's cross appeared to hit Kempson's arm in the box.

Luton should have snatched victory with virtually the last kick of the game as Kovacs jinked his way to the byline and teased his cross to the back post where Boucaud's header beat Stewart but Law was in the right place to hack off the line.