



Saturday 3rd December 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3, BLYTH SPARTANS 3
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

Reece Prestedge rescued a point for the Blues with a header from a Dwight Gayle free-kick two minutes into stoppage time in this vital encounter with bottom of the league Blyth Spartans. Stortford had been two goals up early in the second half but then squandered the lead as the Spartans netted three goals in 19 minutes before the skipper was the saviour with the late goal.

The match between two of the sides in the bottom three was of a poor standard for the Blue Square Bet North. Both teams gave away possession far too easily. Certainly the first 45 minutes saw few openings created by both teams and the game only came to life just before the break. The second half improved from an entertainment point of view but the standard didn't.

The only change that Ian Walker made to his starting eleven was Scott Shulton coming into the midfield for Paco Craig who missed the match with a toe injury picked up in the Tonbridge FA Trophy replay. The other changes were on the bench where Sebastian Dunbar and Mitch Hahn returned.

Good work by Max Lette Jallow in the 4th minute provided an opening as David Adepipe then collected the ball on the right and played it inside to Dwight Gayle whose 15 yard shot aimed inside the far post went through a defender's legs but visiting keeper Robert Birdsall, diving to his right, saved. At the other end Blyth's nippy Wayne Phillips was just wide in the 16th minute following indecision in the Blues' defence. Adepipe, with a shot just wide of the mark and Gayle with a shot saved went close for Stortford but in the 25th minute only a timely tackle from Max Lette Jallow stopped Jamie Mole a yard or so inside the box. The visitors appealed for a penalty but the Stortford right back clearly got his boot to the ball first.

The Blues lost Phil Anderson in the 28th minute with a foot injury and he was replaced by Sebastian Dunbar. There was a period of uneventful play up until three minutes before half-time when Reece Prestedge was fouled 25 yards out and Dwight Gayle's free-kick deflected just wide for a corner. Prestedge's flag-kick swung in and central defender Greg Pearson headed away at the back post for another corner. This corner kick from the left by Junior Dadson came over towards the six yard box but Referee Carl Fitch saw Pearson pushing over Sean Francis and awarded Blues a spot-kick. Dwight Gayle's penalty in the 44th minute was kept out by keeper Birdsall diving to his right but fortunately David Adepipe reacted quicker than anyone else and squared the loose ball back across goal and REECE PRESTEDGE was there at the far post to slip the ball into the net (1-0).

Because of a number of stoppages in the first half there were five minutes of added time before the interval and both Phillips, with a shot, and substitute Glen Taylor with a header, went close for Spartans.

Half time: 1-0

On the restart, Jordan Archer made an early save at the expense of a corner from Taylor who had cut in from the left flank but the Blues extended their lead in the 54th minute. Reece Prestedge broke out of defence and a great pass from him found Dwight Gayle who, in turn, drilled the ball out to DAVID ADEPIPE and the newcomer ran in from the right and drove a great shot from 18 yards low inside the far upright. This was Adepipe's first goal Stortford (2-0).

Glen Taylor had a half chance for the Spartans soon afterwards but Jordan Archer gathered the ball safely and the Northumberland side then made a double substitution that resulted in them seemingly upping their game. They pulled a goal back in the 59th minute. Blyth attacks had already made the

Stortford defence look exposed and when Glen Taylor held up the ball and laid it on for NEAL HOOKS to collect and cut in from the left Jordan Archer was given no chance with a low shot into the far corner (2-1).

Ten minutes later the scores were level. Jack Jeffries was unable to get much power on a headed clearance midway inside his own half and GLEN TAYLOR got possession and ran unimpeded before hammering a 20 yard drive past Archer into the corner of the net (2-2).

Junior Dadson, twice, and Scott Shulton threatened with efforts on keeper Birdsall's goal but Stortford found themselves behind with twelve minute left. Another swift break upfield from the visitors resulted in Jamie Mole's pass out to the right being collected by LEE MASON and the substitute took the ball inside and then unleashed a rising shot from the edge of the box over Archer and into the roof of the net (2-3).

Dwight Gayle had a shot from the edge of the area saved by the diving Robert Birdsall, low down and then shortly after when Steffan Gaisie entered the fray in the 84th minute almost his first touch provided a chance for fellow substitute Mitch Hahn. However, Hahn's 20 yarder was a foot wide of Birdsall's right upright.

With time running out Phillips, for the visitors had a shot held by Archer above his head whilst Gaisie's shot on the turn following a Hahn long throw was saved by Birdsall. There were three minutes of added time and in the second of these the skipper snatched the much needed equaliser. Reece Prestedge, himself, was fouled wide out on the left and when Dwight Gayle's free-kick swung in from the touch-line PRESTEDGE took advantage of hesitancy in the Blyth defence to head the ball into the back of the net (3-3).

This was Stortford's third successive draw at home in Blue Square Bet North. Referee Carl Fitch booked Sebastian Dunbar and Blyth's Jamie Mole during the first half of the match.

Full time: 3-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Bai Mass Lette Jallow (sub – Steffan Gaisie 84 mins); Phil Anderson (sub – Sebastian Dunbar 28 mins); Scott Shulton; Jack Jeffries; Sean Francis; David Adepipe (sub – Mitch Hahn 79 mins); Reece Prestedge; Dwight Gayle; Daniel Subuola; Junior Dadson..
Unused substitutes: Ritchie Jones and Alli Abdullahi.

BLYTH SPARTANS: Robert Birdsall; Richie Slaughter; Phil Cave (sub – Rob Briggs 57 mins); Dan Groves; Greg Pearson; Wayne Buchanan; Chris Emms (sub – Lee Mason 57 mins); Neal Hooks; Graeme Armstrong (sub – Glen Taylor 14 mins); Jamie Mole; Wayne Phillips.
Unused substitutes: Carl Jones and Matt Hunter.

Attendance: 297