



Saturday 13th August 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0, COLWYN BAY 2
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

Two headed goals from the visitors from North Wales – one in each half – saw the Blues start pointless at Woodside Park in the new chapter of their history in Blue Square Bet North.

Generally they played much better than in pre-season but unfortunately lacked any cutting edge up front. They were made to pay for their lack of punch as their opponents looked more incisive going forward.

Ian Walker's starting line-up was, in the end, not too far different to that which finished last season. Both Connor Essam and Dean Rance were returning, each on a month's loan from Gillingham and in fact there were 7 players who had been in the squad for the final match of the last campaign against Dorchester Town whilst another 4 had played at one time or another last season.

Bay, who had just achieved two successive promotions, and Stortford made tentative starts and play was even in the opening stages. In the 12th minute Ali Abdullahi was fouled midway in the Colwyn half and Connor Essam was almost on the end of Scott Shulton's free-kick towards the left side of goal.

At the other end two minutes later Dan Meadowcroft's near post header from Luke Denson's free-kick from wide on the left just inched past the far upright. Then, in the 20th minute, as the play started to open out a little, Michael Bakare lost possession and Denton's cross this time from the right found striker Rob Hopley who saw his shot from the edge of the box brilliantly turned away for a corner by Nicky Eyre.

Straight from the break from the flag kick the Blues were close to going ahead. Bakare found Ade Cole, on the right, with an excellent crossfield pass and when the winger passed inside into the box Dwight Gayle, slightly off balance, fired inches over the bar from 12 yards.

Bay's Sean Doherty flighted a free-kick into the box in the 26th minute which led to a goalmouth scramble before Eyre gained possession. However, in the 32nd minute the visitors took the lead. Following a move up the right touchline Denton crossed into the box and JOHN MCKENNA's well directed header from 15 yards beat Eyre, who was at full stretch, and the ball finished in the net, just inside the near post (0-1).

Stortford were putting together some useful moves without looking dangerous. However, three minutes from the break the ball came out of the visitor's box and Michael Bakare drove at goal but keeper Chris Sanna dropped to his left to hold on to the ball.

Half time: 0-1

The Welshmen doubled their lead four minutes after the interval. Good work in midfield from Gareth Evans saw the ball arrive out on the right wing and skipper Jon Newby gained possession and crossed into the box where SEAN DOHERTY sent a glancing header across Eyre and into the far corner of the net (0-2).

This was obviously a big blow for Stortford but they should have pulled a goal back in the 53rd minute. Max Lette Jallow's throw down the right touchline was dummied over by Dwight Gayle to allow Ade Cole to go on a run and centre low across the six yard box where Dean Rance was left with an easy chance at the far post. Unfortunately the loan player somehow dragged his shot wide of the target.

Only a minute later a Scott Shulton mishit shot fell to Dwight Gayle and the striker's angled shot shaved the far post.

Gareth Evans went close for the visitors in the 67th minute with a shot from the angle of the area following a Doherty corner but it was Stortford who were gaining a grip of the midfield and they forced a number of corners around the midway stage of the second half.

Unfortunately, despite having most of the possession in the latter stages of the contest the Blues could not break down Bay's defence and in the 76th minute Nicky Eyre had to make a good save from Newby.

In the 84th minute a fierce goalbound shot from Michael Bakare from 20 yards deflected off the head of defender Rod McDonald and just cleared the bar and the resultant corner taken by Bakare went low across the six yard box without anyone getting a touch. Then, just before the final whistle, substitute Alex Read's header was narrowly off target from fellow substitute Mitch Hahn's centre.

Apart from a need to pose more threat up front the Blues need to add some steel to their play as the statistics show that whilst Stortford committed seven fouls in the first half, they committed none at all after the break. The visitors collected two bookings with Fraser McLachlan and Rod McDonald shown yellow cards by Referee John Busby.

Full time: 0-2

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Nicky Eyre; Bai Mass Lette Jallow (sub – Mitch Hahn 84 mins); Phil Anderson; Mo Habu; Connor Essam; Ali Abdullahi; Ade Cole; Dean Rance; Dwight Gayle (sub – Alex Read 80 mins); Scott Shulton (sub – Junior Dadson 73 mins); Michael Bakare.
Unused substitutes: Reece Prestedge, and Jack Jeffries.

COLWYN BAY: Chris Sanna; Luke Denson; Mike Lea; Rod McDonald; Dan Meadowcroft; Fraser McLachlan; Gareth Evans (sub – Anthony Sheehan 90 mins); John McKenna; Rob Hopley (sub – Karl Noon 82 mins); Jon Newby; Sean Doherty (sub – Daniel Lloyd-McGoldrick 77 mins).
Unused substitutes: Lee Davey and Simon Williams.

Attendance: 363