



Saturday 23rd July 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0, Gabala FC 0

This pre-season match against Tony Adams' Azerbaijan side finished in a goal-less stalemate at Woodside Park. As the scoreline suggests the defences of both teams were in control for the most part although the keepers were called into action from time to time.

The Blues best period was in the opening twenty minutes or so as the visitors' custodian, Graeme Smith, who was released by Motherwell at the end of last season, was kept busy. He kept out a shot from Michael Bakare with an outstretched boot early on and then held on to a Junior Dadson far post header. In the 8th minute Smith blocked an angled shot from Craig Calver and then dealt with a Reece Prestedge free-kick in the 24th minute.

Gradually the Azerbaijani side began to settle in midfield and Nicky Eyre blocked away an effort from Arif Isayev after 25 minutes. Shortly afterwards the same player broke through after a Blues error but his final shot from a tight angle finished in the side-netting.

Nicky Eyre was again called into action on the half-hour when he tipped a flick from Nuran Gurbanov over the bar. At the other end Smith held a header from Phil Anderson under the bar and the half finished with the Blues on the attack.

Half time

There were few clear cut chances created after the break. Gurbanov headed just over from a Rovshan Amiraslanov left wing cross in the 70th minute and a fierce drive by Isayev was turned round a post by Stortford substitute keeper Arnold Gudalevich.

Late in the match Mitch Hahn was narrowly wide with a free-kick and then in the 88th minute Danny Francis outmuscled Gabala skipper Sasha Yunisoglu and set up substitute Alex Read for a shot at goal from the edge of the box but Smith reacted well to parry the ball away from danger. Just before the final whistle Masoud Olafunmishe almost got on the end of a Prestedge free-kick into the six yard box but the ball ran through to keeper Smith.

Full time

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Nicky Eyre; Bai Max Lette Jallow; Phil Anderson; Mo Habu; Masoud Olafunmishe; Mitch Hahn; Ade Cole; Reece Prestedge; Craig Calver; Michael Bakare; Junior Dadson.

2nd half substitutes: Arnold Gudalevich, Adam Fenwick, Ali Abdullahi, Ritchie Jones, Narada Barnard, Danny Francis, Alex Read and Chike Nnatuanya.

Attendance: 141