



Saturday 5th November 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, GAINSBOROUGH TRINITY 1
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

A much improved performance from the Blues saw them take a share of the points with visiting third in the table Gainsborough Trinity. Both sides had their good spells in the match but Stortford nearly snatched a late win in stoppage time when skipper Reece Prestedge's header was turned over the bar by Trinity keeper Kenny Arthur.

This was a first draw for both sides this campaign and it was also Stortford's first draw since 26th March when the Blues shared the spoils at Ebbsfleet.

Ian Walker made a couple of changes to the side that had gone out of the FA Cup a week previously. Whilst Sean Francis made a welcome return to the heart of the defence Phil Anderson was absent due to illness. Another alteration in defence was Jack Jeffries partnering Sean Francis in the centre and Paco Craig moving into midfield with Alli Abdullahi dropping to the subs bench. Whilst Francis' presence made the defence look more stable and was Stortford's Man of the Match, Jeffries did well at the back and Paco Craig and Daniel Subuola had good games.

The Blues made an excellent start and were close to going ahead in the 6th minute as Ryan Williams' header back towards his goal fell short and Daniel Subuola clipped the ball over the onrushing Arthur and it flew agonisingly wide of the far post. There was plenty of good link-up play from the Blues early on and in the 11th minute Scott Shulton drilled a 23 yard low effort just wide. Trinity were slow to settle and Stortford were on top in midfield at this stage.

In the 19th minute a corner on the right from Trinity's Ryan Williams was met by Gavin Cowan header and Sean Francis was well positioned to head the ball off the goal-line. However, six minutes later Stortford were ahead. Scott Shulton's deep free-kick from wide on the right and just inside the Trinity half looked to be cleared but Daniel Subuola gained possession on the edge of the box and worked his way to the left past several challenges before crossing. His centre took a deflection off the boot of centre back Andrew Boyce and hit the near angle of the post and bar before SEAN FRANCIS slid the rebound into the back of the net. It was Francis' first goal in Stortford colours (1-0).

The Lincolnshire side suffered a blow soon afterwards as keeper Kenny Arthur, former Partick Thistle custodian, and currently on loan to Trinity from Grimsby Town seemed to pull a hamstring although he did remain on the pitch for the remainder of the match. Gradually the visitors began to look more threatening and in the 35th minute a swift move up the right involving Lewis McMahon, Leon Mettam and Dominic Roma ended with the latter's shot turned into the side-netting by Jordan Archer. Then a minute later a cross from the left by Kevin Sandwith found striker Darryn Stamp unmarked near the penalty spot but fortunately his header was wide of Archer's left upright.

The gathering pressure paid dividends for the visitors four minutes from the interval as Sandwith again crossed long from the left and this time LEON METTAM was well placed to control and hit fiercely past Archer from 10 yards (1-1).

Half time: 1-1

There was plenty of end to end play on the restart. In the 48th minute Ritchie Jones set Daniel Subuola on a run with a fine pass before Scott Shulton's shot from the edge of the box was saved low down by keeper Arthur and then at the other end Jordan Archer reacted well to turn a Mettam shot round the post when the goalscorer cut in from the left. Shortly afterwards Trinity's Andrew Boyce shot over the bar following a corner.

Daniel Subuola was very prominent in the second half and when he collected the ball on the right in the 52nd minute he went on a run which culminated with a drive at goal that was narrowly wide. Five

minutes later Scott Shulton played the ball to Dwight Gayle in space to the right but the youngster slipped as he shot from 15 yards and the ball drifted harmlessly wide. The Blues continued to have the better of exchanges and Lewis Whiteley almost got on the end of a Dwight Gayle throw to the near post. Subuola made tracks again on the right in the 63rd minute and his centre across the face of goal was just missed by Dwight Gayle and when the striker retrieved the ball he slipped it to Paco Craig whose first time shot from 25 yards was parried away by keeper Arthur.

As in the first 45 minutes the visitors came more into the picture late on and Sean Francis made a great tackle in the 74th minute to stop Leon Mettam as the striker headed for goal from the left side of the box. With five minutes remaining of normal time Trinity substitute Jamie Yates gained control of the ball on the left and crossed into the middle where Lewis McMahon drove at goal from 12 yards but Jordan Archer pulled off an excellent save pushing the ball aside at full length.

The Blues almost won the match in the first of three minutes stoppage time. Substitute Mitch Hahn's long throw from the left was nodded on at the near post across goal by Sean Francis and Steffan Gaisie and Reece Prestedge's close range header was tipped over the bar by Arthur.

Referee Gary Jerden booked Stortford skipper Reece Prestedge and there were also yellow cards for Trinity's Kevin Sandwith, Gavin Cowan and Andrew Boyce.

Full time: 1-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Ritchie Jones; Sebastian Dunbar; Paco Craig (sub – Mitch Hahn 88 mins); Jack Jeffries; Sean Francis; Lewis Whiteley (sub – Ade Cole 83 mins); Reece Prestedge; Dwight Gayle (sub – Steffan Gaisie 79 mins); Scott Shulton; Daniel Subuola
Unused substitutes: Alli Abdullahi and Junior Dadson.

GAINSBOROUGH TRINITY: Kenny Arthur; Dominic Roma; Kevin Sandwith; Gavin Cowan; Andrew Boyce; Lewis McMahon; Jonathan D'Laryea; Ryan Williams (sub – Shane Clarke 67 mins); Leon Mettam; Darryn Stamp (sub – Ryan Paczkowski 72 mins); Craig Nelthorpe (sub – Jamie Yates 79 mins).
Unused substitutes: Jonathan Williams and Luke Waterfall.

Attendance: 351