



Saturday 17th December 2011

GLOUCESTER CITY 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

A revitalised Stortford produced a solid performance to complete their first "double" in the Blue Square Bet North and record their first League win since 8th October when they beat the Tigers 3-2 at Woodside Park. It was a dream start to new Manager Rod Stringer's reign as his side stuck to their game plan and, with confidence quickly growing they finished the match well in control. It was only the third time this Blue Square Bet North campaign that Stortford had kept a clean sheet and the first time away from home.

Goals either side of the interval from Dwight Gayle and Junior Dadson produced the winning margin but the Blues had chances, particularly before half-time, to have scored more. The match saw just Dwight Gayle play up front on his own. With the back four of Ritchie Jones, Sean Francis, Phil Anderson and Sebastian Dunbar playing superbly and giving nothing away, Jordan Archer was rarely troubled in the match. All in midfield did well with Alli Abdullahi having probably his best game so far this term whilst Gayle, with his runs and control, was a problem for the hosts' defence all afternoon.

The squad for the match just had one change from that which lost at Carshalton a week earlier as David Adepipe dropped out and Phil Anderson returned after injury and partnered Sean Francis in the centre of the back four. Both Scott Shulton and Junior Dadson were in the starting eleven having begun on bench the previous Saturday.

The encounter was played on a perfect pitch at Whaddon Road, Cheltenham and play was even in the opening minutes. However, it was clear from an early stage that the Blues' players were closing down their opponents quickly and giving them little space.

The first opening came in the 13th minute when a long ball up the left flank from Phil Anderson set Dwight Gayle on a run on the left flank but Stortford's leading marksman's shot as he cut in was blocked by keeper Lewis Carey. A Matt Rose header following a Charlie Reece corner in the 16th minute just cleared the bar.

Then, when the Blues won a corner in the 21st minute, Scott Shulton's flag kick from the left was inches over the heads of Sean Francis and Phil Anderson in front of goal.

A Will Morford shot on the turn after a promising Tigers attack on the right was held by Archer low down close to the near post and then in the 23rd minute at the other end a long throw from Dwight Gayle was cleared out as far as Alli Abdullahi whose 20 yard rising effort was held by keeper Carey above his head.

Archer did well to cut out a dangerous left wing cross from Steve Davies and then, on the half hour, a useful attack involving Scott Shulton and Dwight Gayle almost provided a chance for Reece Prestedge but Carey just gathered the ball in time.

City had most of the possession at this stage but it was Stortford who took the lead in the 35th minute. A fine left footed pass out of his own half by skipper Reece Prestedge set DWIGHT GAYLE chasing the ball to the edge of the angle of the box. It looked as though Carey was going to get the ball first but the Stortford number nine's sheer persistence saw him win possession and slide the ball from an angle inside the near post and past the desperate efforts of centre back Tom Hamblin attempt to clear off the line (0-1)

Steve Davies fired wide via a deflection a minute later for the hosts but Stortford had two near misses to increase their lead before the break. In the 37th minute Gayle released Junior Dadson on the left and the winger cut in to shoot inches wide of the far post and then six minutes later Merrick James-Lewis put Dwight Gayle clear on goal but Carey came out quickly to block away a shot and the ball ran loose to safety.

Half time: 0-1

The Blues didn't have to wait long to double their lead. In the 50th minute it was again Reece Prestedge, this time right footed, who sent the ball forward from inside his own half and JUNIOR DADSON who ran through an exposed defence before coolly slotting low past Lewis Carey (0-2).

Gloucester used up their allocation of substitutions by the 55th minute but they created little up front although Davies forced Jordan Archer to make a routine save, falling to his left in the 67th minute. Stortford were quite happy to sit back and let the home side come at them and when the Blues did go forward they looked likely to extend their lead. Junior Dadson almost collected a Prestedge ball into the area but the bounce defeated him.

Steve Davies tested Jordan Archer with a shot from just inside the area in the 75th minute but, at the other end, Scott Shulton almost intercepted a City pass across the face of the Tigers' goal in the 81st minute and Dwight Gayle nearly collected a back header from centre back Tom Hamblin five minutes later.

The Blues had to withstand some late pressure from the hosts as they won a number of free-kicks and corners but there were no alarms and they calmly saw out time with a feature being the much improved standard of passing by Stortford. They rarely gave the ball away in the entire match.

This was the Blues second away win in the Blue Square Bet North this season whilst no cards were shown during the game.

Full time: 0-2

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Ritchie Jones; Sebastian Dunbar; Alli Abdullahi; Sean Francis; Phil Anderson; Scott Shulton; Merrick James-Lewis; Dwight Gayle; Reece Prestedge; Junior Dadson (sub - Daniel Subuola 87 mins)

Unused substitutes: Bai Mass Lette Jallow, Sam Ives, Mitch Hahn and Jack Jeffries.

GLOUCESTER CITY: Lewis Carey; Sam Rawlings (sub – Jack Harris 46 mins); Tyler Weir; Matt Rose; Tom Hamblin; Tom Webb (sub – Darren Mullings 51 mins); Charlie Reece; Matt Lock; Darren Edwards; Will Morford (sub – Adam Mann 55 mins); Steve Davies.

Unused substitutes: Neil Mustoe and Scott Wilson.

Attendance: 225