



Saturday 8th October 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3, GLOUCESTER CITY 2
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

Stortford collected a deserved three points from what turned out to be a close encounter at Woodside Park. It was a tense finale with the Blues going three ahead against the Tigers just a couple of minutes after the interval and then the visitors netted twice in the last twenty minutes to make it a nervy end for Stortford fans before the final whistle.

Going forward with the pace of Michael Bakare and Dwight Gayle City's defence looked very vulnerable throughout but after going three ahead the Blues allowed the visitors to get a grip of the midfield and press forward late on.

With Sean Francis and Junior Dadson not recovering from their injuries collected at Canvey Island, Ian Walker had to make a few changes. Ritchie Jones moved across to partner Phil Anderson in the centre of defence whilst Jack Jeffries occupied the right back slot. Alli Abdullahi started as did on-loan midfielder, from Notts County, Lewis Whiteley who was preferred to Ade Cole.

There wasn't much between the Blues and the Tigers at the start in this the first League meeting between the two sides. However, an early corner from Scott Shulton was well taken by keeper Lewis Carey. Then in the 11th minute Stortford took the lead. A good move up the right involving Lewis Whiteley, Dwight Gayle and Scott Shulton ended with the latter player gaining possession just inside the box and as Carey advanced Shulton played the ball low towards the far post where LEWIS WHITELEY calmly shot into the net past a couple of defenders on the line (1-0).

Michael Bakare hit a fine shot on the turn from distance that wasn't far off target in the 16th minute but the visitors, fighting back threatened and Scott Shulton did well to get in a blocking challenge to stop Jake Harris shooting at goal after a Stortford headed clearance from a corner had fallen to the Gloucester player.

Action was end to end for a period around the midway point of the half and in the 25th minute Dwight Gayle was unlucky as he flicked a through ball from skipper Reece Prestedge just wide of Carey's right hand upright. A minute later, at the other end, Tigers' Steve Davies had a shot scrambled away at the near post by Jordan Archer for a corner. Then, on the half-hour, Alli Abdullahi found Michael Bakare out on the left with a great pass and the Blues' leading scorer cut in and ghosted past a couple of defenders before driving a shot at goal that keeper Carey saved low to his left.

Stortford continued to look the more likely to score and they added a second goal three minutes before the break. Sebastian Dunbar, from his own half, sent a long pass forward into the Gloucester half and with the visiting defence nowhere to be seen DWIGHT GAYLE ran through to chip the ball wide and over Carey into the net (2-0).

Half time: 2-0

Things got even better for Stortford in the 47th minute as they went three ahead. Another good move down the middle left the Tigers' defence in a mess as Shulton, Gayle and Bakare exchanged passes and when Gayle slipped a pass to MICHAEL BAKARE the striker took the ball on a few paces before squeezing a low 15 yard shot past Carey's left hand and inside the upright (3-0).

City's Matt Lock's free-kick in the 53rd minute was deflected off the defensive wall just over the bar and then a strong challenge from Ritchie Jones stopped substitute Will Morford jinking his way through on the right. More pressure from the visitors resulted in Matt Coupe shoot wide from an acute angle after another Lock free-kick.

The Blues nearly increased their lead in the 62nd minute as a bout of passing between Gayle and Bakare on the left ended with Bakare's shot producing a fine save by Carey, turning the ball round the post for a corner.

The visitors were pushing the Blues back, however, and Jordan Archer turned a shot from the edge of the box by Matt Lock over the bar. They cut the deficit with twenty minutes left when Mike Green's long ball found WILL MORFORD and the substitute's fierce low shot from just inside the area went through Archer to find the back of the net (3-1). It was the first goal that Archer had conceded since first donning a Stortford jersey.

The Blues' lead was cut to one in the 86th minute. Morford somehow was allowed in cut in from the left and his centre across the face of the goal found skipper TOM WEBB at the far post and he duly scored (3-2).

It was nervy times for Stortford and soon afterwards Matt Lock's effort from 20 yards sailed over the bar whilst in the four minutes of stoppage time added on at the end the Blues survived strong shouts for a penalty after the ball may have hit a Stortford hand in the area.

Reece Prestedge, Michael Bakare and Mitch Hahn were shown yellow cards by Referee Ian Rathbone and the visitors' Matt Coupe and Will Morford also collected bookings. Reece Prestedge's card means he will get a one match ban and will miss the visit to Vauxhall Motors.

Full time: 3-2

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Jack Jeffries; Sebastian Dunbar; Alli Abdullahi; Ritchie Jones; Phil Anderson; Lewis Whiteley; Reece Prestedge; Dwight Gayle; Michael Bakare; Scott Shulton (sub – Mitch Hahn 74 mins).

Unused substitutes: Ade Cole, Alex Read, Max Lette Jallow and Junior Dadson.

GLOUCESTER CITY: Lewis Carey; Mike Green; Tyler Weir; Matt Coupe; Steve Davies (sub – Matt Rose 55 mins); Tom Webb; Matt Lock; Darren Mullings; Darren Edwards; Jake Harris (sub – Will Morford 55 mins); Jack Harris (sub – Adam Mann 31 mins).

Unused substitutes: Neil Mustoe and Sam Rawlings.

Attendance: 401