



Saturday 7th January 2012

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 4, GUISELEY 1
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

The Blues' best performance this season saw them through to a third win in four matches under new Manager Rod Stringer. This upset was fully deserved with an excellent first half which established a two goal lead. Then, under pressure after the restart, the Blues defended with plenty of grit and although the Lions reduced the arrears, two late goals on the break ensured the points and a boost to the goal difference. There were great performances all over the park as the Blues gave 100% for the entire contest.

Stortford's Yorkshire opponents came to Woodside Park in third place in the Blue Square Bet North table, boasting a run of seven straight wins and unbeaten in the League since 24th September. For the Blues this was a first Blue Square Bet North victory at home since 8th October when beating Gloucester City.

Rod Stringer made one change to the side that had won on New Year's Day at Histon with new signing Reneil – "Ricky" Sappleton playing up front instead of Daniel Subuola who was on the substitutes' bench alongside another new signing, midfielder Harry Milton.

Stortford looked comfortable from the first whistle although the visitors' own new signing, James Walshaw from Darlington, nearly gave them the lead in the 5th minute. The striker cut in from the right and fired in a shot that Jordan Archer did well to turn round the near post for a corner. The hosts threatened for the first time three minutes later as Sappleton and Dwight Gayle linked before the latter crossed from the right and Reece Prestedge had a header blocked by a defender close to the goal-line.

It wasn't long before Stortford took the lead. In the 10th minute Sebastian Dunbar played the ball up the left flank and Dwight Gayle quickly turned it into the path of REECE PRESTEDGE darting into the box and the Blues skipper nipped in to just get possession before the oncoming keeper Steve Drench and ran past him before sidefooting into the net from a narrow angle (1-0).

The lead was doubled nine minutes later with a fine goal. Sappleton, with his back to goal, received the ball following a free-kick and laid it out to the right for Ritchie Jones to drill in a low ball to the near post and ARRON WICKHAM reacted quicker than the visiting defence to find the net from close range for his first Stortford goal (2-0).

Sebastian Dunbar, from outside the box, drove a shot across the face of the visitors' goal in the 24th minute and then, at the other end, two minutes later, Archer produced a fine diving save to keep out an Andy Holdsworth free-kick. A Scott Shulton free-kick ten minutes before the break resulted in Ricky Sappleton having a shot from 12 yards at the far post that deflected off a defender and narrowly over the bar. Shortly afterwards Drench just beat Sappleton to the ball outside the area and when the big striker gained possession seconds later his lob at goal from 25 yards was just over the target.

Right on the interval Sean Francis missed with an attempted clearance outside his box and although Guiseley's Chris Senior made tracks for goal fortunately the defence covered quickly and his shot lacked power and deflected off Ritchie Jones back into the safe hands of Jordan Archer.

Half time: 2-0

Straight from the restart Guiseley pushed forward and early on James Walshaw was almost in at the near post following a cross from the left by Dave Merris but he couldn't control the ball and it trickled past the upright.

In the 50th minute Jordan Archer did well under pressure to take a deep free-kick from Jamie Clarke under pressure and was slightly injured in the process. Five minutes later there was an escape for the Blues as Simon Baldry headed across the face of Archer's goal from close range after another Merris cross.

Down the other end, good work by Sappleton on the left led to Scott Shulton going close with a shot past the post from the cross and on the hour the new striker almost ran through on goal after an Arron Wickham pass reached him but the ball didn't travel with him as he advanced goalwards.

Guiseley reduced the lead in the 72nd minute. Substitute Danny Boshall, who had only been on the pitch for a couple of minutes, combined with Andy Holdsworth in an attack down the middle and a number of deflections off the legs of Stortford defenders took the ball forward to fellow substitute LEE ELLINGTON, just inside the area, and he tucked it low past the advancing Jordan Archer (2-1).

A few minutes later Scott Shulton again went close, this time after a good work and a cross from Dwight Gayle but the visitors pushed forward and a Gavin Rothery drive from the edge of the box just cleared the bar.

With Guiseley pushing forward they were leaving gaps at the back and in the 84th minute when DWIGHT GAYLE got the ball some fifteen yards inside the Guiseley half he laid the ball on for Scott Shulton to return a pass down the middle and Stortford's leading scorer advanced to the edge of the area and clinically hit a powerful shot low into the corner that gave keeper Drench no chance (3-1).

The Yorkshire side were reduced to ten men two minutes later as Gavin Rothery was sent off by Referee Stuart Butler for an elbow into Alli Abdullahi's face. The Lions kept battling and Jordan Archer, again, made a save tipping a shot from the edge of the area from James Walshaw over the bar.

Referee Butler added six minutes stoppage time and in the fifth of those minutes the Blues grabbed a fourth goal. In a break from defence Reece Prestedge, in his own half, swept the ball out to the right for substitute JUNIOR DADSON to fasten on to and cut in goalwards before hammering low past Drench into the far corner (4-1).

In addition to the sending off, there were bookings for the visitors' Andy Holdsworth and Simon Baldry and the Blues' Ricky Sappleton and Daniel Subuola.

Full time: 4-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Ritchie Jones; Sebastian Dunbar; Alli Abdullahi; Sean Francis; Phil Anderson; Dwight Gayle (sub – Junior Dadson 90 + 2 mins); Arron Wickham (sub – Merrick James-Lewis 64 mins); Reneil Sappleton (sub – Daniel Subuola 80 mins); Reece Prestedge; Scott Shulton.
Unused substitutes: George Artemi and Harry Milton.

GUISELEY: Steve Drench; Jamie Clarke; Dave Merris; Ciaran Toner; Danny Ellis; Simon Ainge; Simon Baldry (sub – Danny Boshall 70 mins); Andy Holdsworth; Chris Senior (sub – Lee Ellington 46 mins); James Walshaw; Gavin Rothery.
Unused substitutes: Mark Bower, Joe O'Neill and Jacob Giles.

Attendance: 392