



Herts Charity Cup

Tuesday 31st January 2012

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1
(HERTS CHARITY CUP SEMI-FINAL)

Ricky Sappleton's first goal for the Blues ensured a victory at a bitterly cold Vauxhall Road and a place in the County Charity Cup Final in which they will meet Spartan South Midland Leaguers Leverstock Green on a date to be decided.

This was a tie that Stortford could have sown up by early in the second half as they had a few chances after the break to have extended their first half lead. As it was they didn't take those chances and in the end the hosts could have taken the contest into extra time. The Blues back four played well and Matt Johnson was the main player in midfield. Paco Craig was a second half substitute and so he made his first appearance since breaking a toe in the FA Trophy replay tie at Tonbridge Angels before Christmas.

On an increasingly hard and freezing surface, the only goal of the game came in the 7th minute. Callum Stewart's throw on the right was flicked on by Ricky Sappleton and when Sebastian Dunbar played the ball across the area it was SAPPLETON who gained possession and, allowed time and space by the Tudors' defence, fired a low, angled shot past former Blue keeper Ross Kitteridge into the far bottom corner (0-1).

Hemel came back strongly for a time and Bill Morgan headed narrowly over the bar in the 14th minute following a corner on the right from Dave Pearce. Then, just after the half hour, Ryan O'Hara's flag kick from the other side put Jordan Archer under pressure and the ball hit the far upright.

A Dwight Gayle cross from the right was almost converted by Sappleton as it ran across the six yard box whilst at the other end Alieu Jallow's shot on the turn from the edge of the box was not far off target in the 36th minute. A 35 yard effort from defender Danny May deflected off of Mark Haines but fortunately straight into the arms of Jordan Archer.

Stortford, however, finished the first half strongly. A Sebastian Dunbar cross from the left resulted in a close range header from Matt Johnson that rebounded off the back of a Hemel defender to safety. Then, in the 42nd minute, when Johnson played a through ball down the middle Dwight Gayle fastened on to it but his attempted chip over Kitteridge deflected off the keeper's hands past a post for a corner.

Half time: 0-1

Daniel Subuola replaced Ricky Sappleton immediately after the break and the Blues continued to be the dominant side. Five minutes after the restart a good move involving Johnson and Shulton ended with the latter finding Dwight Gayle cutting in from the right flank but the Blues' leading marksman delayed his shot from just inside the box momentarily and a defender managed to block the shot when it came.

In the 56th minute Matt Johnson nodded a long clearance from Jordan Archer into Dwight Gayle's path and he made tracks for goal in the inside left channel before lobbing the ball over the advancing Kitteridge but the shot drifted just wide of the far upright.

Stortford continued to have the edge but Jordan Archer had to make a good save from Ryan O'Hara and then with the ball bouncing around in the Blues area a couple of Hemel shots were blocked.

The only card of the match came just before the hour when the Tudors' Danny May was shown a yellow by Referee Stephen Bates for a crude tackle on Scott Shulton near the halfway line. The Stortford midfielder left the pitch six minutes later with a hamstring problem to be replaced by Paco Craig.

With twenty minutes left Jordan Archer did well to cut out an inswinging cross from Dave Pearce on the left but chances for either side were limited in the remaining time. Referee Bates did add on four minutes of stoppage time and in the second of these, after a Hemel free-kick, substitute Nikki Beale had a shot from 10 yards at the far post parried away for a corner by Jordan Archer.

This win was Stortford's 7th out of 8 in Cup-ties on the road this season.

Full time: 0-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Jordan Archer; Callum Stewart; Harry Milton; Bai Mass Lette Jallow; Mark Haines; Phil Anderson; Dwight Gayle; Matt Johnson; Reneil Sappleton (sub – Daniel Subuola 46 mins); Scott Shulton (sub – Paco Craig 66 mins); Sebastian Dunbar (sub – Junior Dadson 79 mins).
Unused substitutes: Ben Davison and Ritchie Jones.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: Ross Kitteridge; Danny May; James Brighton; Ryan O'Hara; Bill Morgan; Matt McEntegart; Dave Pearce; Charlie Gorman; Ellis Remy (sub – Nikki Beale 86 mins); Alieu Jallow; Ryan Blake (sub – Connor Calcutt 79 mins).
Unused substitutes: Lewis Toomey and Jack Smith.

Attendance: 47