



Tuesday 23rd August 2011

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, SOLIHULL MOORS 0
(BLUE SQUARE BET NORTH)

A Dwight Gayle goal – his first for the Blues – after 12 minutes was enough to bag a victory and open Stortford's points account in Blue Square Bet North. They had the opportunities before the break to have gone in with a bigger lead but the Midlands visitors had more of the game territorially in the final 45 minutes. However, the defence was generally steady with Connor Essam outstanding in the middle and the Moors were confined to just one clear cut opportunity to equalise after the interval.

Ian Walker made a number of changes to the side that had lost at Blyth. Nicky Eyre returned between the posts, his wife Lia having given birth to a baby son Ellis at the weekend. Ritchie Jones, with his first match for some time, came in on the right side of defence and Connor Essam made a welcome return after his absence on Saturday. Also, Ade Cole and Dwight Gayle were in the starting line-up having been originally on the bench at Blyth.

Both teams came into the match pointless and found a wet, greasy pitch at Woodside Park after a day of persistent rain. The Blues were slow to settle and in the 9th minute the defence was in a muddle to allow James McPike to run at goal but keeper Eyre was quickly off his line to deny the Moors striker with an excellent block just inside the box.

Then, in the 12th minute, with their first real attack of the game the Blues went ahead. Michael Bakare swept the ball out to the left flank where Junior Dadson took the ball on before crossing low towards the six yard box. Visiting keeper Jasbir Singh failed to hold the ball properly at the near post and DWIGHT GAYLE lifted the ball over Singh at the second attempt from a tight angle (1-0).

The goal seemed to settle Stortford but in the 17th minute the Moors almost equalised. Nicky Eyre dealt with an awkward long range shot from Jordan Fitzpatrick but the keeper's poor clearance set up Danny Spencer for a clear run at goal. Fortunately Eyre saved the shot at the expense of a corner. Stortford were spoiling some of their play with basic errors although the visitors were also making mistakes on the wet surface.

Before the half-hour mark another good Junior Dadson run and cross saw defender Karl Broadhurst concede a corner or otherwise the ball would have run through to Dwight Gayle in front of goal and then a Scott Shulton free-kick from way out on the left touchline was punched away under pressure by Singh.

In the 36th minute a corner from Luke Bottomer on the right was pushed against the crossbar by Eyre before being cleared but in the minutes leading up to the interval Stortford were close to doubling their lead on several occasions. In the 42nd minute Gayle hit a fierce angled shot from the right that Singh held on the ground at the near post and then seconds later Dadson put Bakare away down the middle with a fine pass but Stortford's leading goalscorer's shot hit Singh's legs and rebounded to safety.

Then, in time added on Ade Cole's chip from outside the area was turned over the bar by Singh and there was still time left for Michael Bakare to rob defender Stuart Pierpoint on the right and cut in towards goal but his blazing drive scorched past the far upright.

Half time: 1-0

Four minutes after the break Junior Dadson was replaced by Mitch Hahn, the winger having suffered a foot injury in the first half.

A quick break upfield in the 51st minute saw Bakare and Gayle combine and the former was lining up a shot but Pierpoint tackled Bakare to concede a corner. Stortford then made a number of promising attacks that came to nothing. However, a long range speculative effort from Gayle was only just wide in the 59th minute and shortly afterwards Mitch Hahn had a low shot from the left edge of the area held fairly comfortably by Singh.

In the 62nd the visitors made a double substitution and two minutes later Michael Blackwood's low centre across the face of Eyre's goal was just missed by James McPike. The second half was generally scrappy and the Blues were conceding the midfield as the match progressed. Substitute Joel Grandison worked his way into a promising position for the Moors in the 70th minute on the edge of the box but his shot lacked power and Nicky Eyre gathered the ball easily.

Solihull's best opportunity to level the scores came in the 79th minute. Bottomer's deep cross from the right put Eyre under pressure and the ball eventually dropped to striker Danny Spencer whose shot from six yards was cleared off the line by Ritchie Jones.

The Midlanders continued to edge the possession until the end and substitute Sam Adkins' free-kick in the 87th minute was deflected off of a Stortford player and flew only inches over the Blue's bar.

A good move late on at the other end saw Michael Bakare lay the ball back to Dean Rance but the substitute's low shot was just wide of the far post. Then in the next attack Mitch Hahn went close with a shot that was held by Singh.

Referee Stuart Butler added four minutes on at the end of the 90 but there were no near misses at either end during this time. The Official took the names of Scott Shulton, Reece Prestedge and Michael Bakare in the second half and Solihull's Jordan Fitzpatrick was shown a yellow card before the break.

Full time: 1-0

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Nicky Eyre; Ritchie Jones; Phil Anderson; Scott Shulton; Mo Habu; Connor Essam; Ade Cole (sub - Dean Rance 81 mins); Reece Prestedge; Dwight Gayle; Michael Bakare; Junior Dadson (sub – Mitch Hahn 49 mins).

Unused substitutes: Alex Read, Alli Abdullahi and Bai Mass Lette Jallow.

SOLIHULL MOORS: Jasbir Singh; Craig Hinton; Michael Blackwood; Jordan Fitzpatrick (sub – Sam Adkins 62 mins); Karl Broadhurst; Stuart Pierpoint; Luke Bottomer; Junior English; Danny Spencer; James McPike; Andre Francis (sub – Joel Grandison 62 mins).

Unused substitutes: Alex Price, Mitch Fellows and Ian Kimberley.

Attendance: 251