

Saturday 22nd Oct 2013

# Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Bishop's Stortford FC



Ebbsfleet Utd



Bishop 's Stortford 3 – 2 Ebbsfleet : HT 2 - 0 : Att 511

## The Skril South

Another excellent performance by Stortford resulted in them climbing to second in the Skril South table and in doing so they recorded their fifth straight competitive win. Strong and competitive throughout the match the final score-line was hardly justice for the Blues as the Fleet scored their two goals in the four minutes of stoppage time at the end of the match. Stortford by this time were down to ten men as Anthony Church was sent-off after receiving a second yellow card with seven minutes of normal time left.

Cliff Akurang again played a prominent role in the win albeit he was only on the field for 33 minutes. His cameo saw him score a brace before the half-hour as well as being a constant menace to the Kent side 's defence until he limped off to be replaced by George Sykes.

For the Blues, it was also the fifth successive time that Rod Stringer has named an unchanged starting eleven. The visitors were also coming into the contest on an unbeaten run having won six competitive games on the bounce. They included in their ranks former Blues Aiden Palmer, Dean Rance and Michael Thalassitis.

There was a minute 's applause before the match in honour of former Reserve Team Manager and local football personality Don Watters.

Stortford were out of their blocks very quickly and looked positive from the outset with their midfield edging proceedings. Fleet had a couple of promising moves early on but the Blues looked menacing in all their early raids. In the fifth minute Kyle Vassell, advancing from the right, struck a 20 yard drive that former Non-League international keeper Preston Edwards gathered low down.

It wasn 't long before the Blues took the lead and it was a special goal in the 9<sup>th</sup> minute by CLIFF AKURANG. A long cross-field ball from left to right by Matt Johnson was intercepted by United 's Anthony Cook but he only misdirected his header down towards the Blues striker who had his back to goal just inside the angle of the box and after controlling the ball he swivelled to send a perfect left footed shot past Edwards high into the top far corner of the net ( 1-0 ).

Anthony Cook cut in from the left at the other end of the pitch to hit a strong drive from 20 yards that Joe Wright held on the ground but Cliff Akurang could have doubled the Blues lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute. He shot wide from close range after Reece Prestedge found Ashley Miller on the right and the attacking defender had crossed into the middle. Shortly afterwards, Callum McNaughton was fractionally wide with a diving far post header following a Reece Prestedge corner on the right.

Stortford 's second goal arrived in the 27<sup>th</sup> minute. CLIFF AKURANG was fouled on the left and when Matt Johnson 's free-kick to the far upright was headed on by Sean Francis Akurang was there to turn the ball into the back of the net from a couple of yards (2-0). Just six minutes later he limped off to a big ovation from Stortford fans.

The Blues continued to have most of the play territorially and in the 37<sup>th</sup> minute Johnny Herd advanced on goal to bullet a rising drive fiercely past the near upright from the edge of the box. Anthony Cook saw a 25 yard free-kick smartly held low down by Joe Wright and then in time added on before the break Reece Prestedge swept the ball out to George Sykes on the right and from the young substitute 's low centre Kyle Vassell just missed connecting at the back stick.

Half-time: 2-0

Stortford kept up the tempo on the restart and they scored the crucial third goal in the 54<sup>th</sup> minute. George Sykes sent the ball out into space on the left wing where Fleet 's Chris Sessegnon should have gained possession but Johnny Herd hassled and harried the Ebbsfleet player into losing control of the ball and Herd was able to cut in and lay it across in front of goal for KYLE VASSELL to flick past Edwards and inside the far upright (3-0).

The Blues didn 't ease up and were almost always first to the ball and skipper Reece Prestedge was very close with a long range volley over the bar on the hour. With twenty minutes left Fleet' s Stacy Long struck a shot from distance that was caught by Joe Wright and it then seemed that the match was going to proceed to a quiet ending.

However, in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute Anthony Church collected his second yellow card of the night from Referee Gary Jerden when fouling Anthony Cook near the edge of the area. The midfielder 's first caution had been in the first half when he was booked for simulation just inside the box. Stortford therefore faced the closing minutes fielding only ten men.

Cook 's resultant free-kick skimmed the top of the roof of the net but the visitors did reduce the deficit in the second minute of four added on at the end of normal time. Anthony Cook 's centre from the right was turned out to the left angle of the area by substitute Billy Bricknell and SHANE HUKÉ cracked a stunning volley under the bar and inside the far post (3-1).

The action wasn 't finished as in the final minute of the match ANTHONY COOK, advancing down the left side, evaded several Blues ' tackles and then hit a powerful, unstoppable 25 yard effort past Joe Wright (3-2). As soon as the game restarted after the goal the final whistle was blown.

Apart from Anthony Church, Referee Jerden also cautioned the Blues ' Sean Francis and George Allen and also Fleet 's Michael Thalassitis.

Full time: 3-2

BISHOP 'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; George Allen; Sean Francis; Callum McNaughton; Matt Johnson (sub – Nicky Symons 76 mins); Anthony Church; Kyle Vassell (sub – Kyle Asante 79 mins); Cliff Akurang (sub – George Sykes 33 mins); Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Harry Baker and Ben Adams.

EBBSFLEET UNITED: Preston Edwards; Joe Howe (sub – Osei Sankofa 29 mins); Aiden Palmer; Daryl McMahon (sub – Billy Bricknell 59 mins); Paul Lorraine; Shane Huke; Chris Sessegnon; Dean Rance; Ben May (sub – Michael Thalassitis 76 mins); Stacy Long; Anthony Cook.

Unused substitutes: Michael Corcoran and Brandon Hall.