

Sunday 10th Nov 2013

Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Bishop's Stortford FC



Northampton Town FC



Bishop 's Stortford 1 - 2 Northampton Town : HT 0 - 0 : Att 2548

The FA Cup 1st Round

In front of the TV cameras at the ProKit UK Stadium and watched by the ground 's largest attendance so far for a competitive match in its history, the Blues gave a typical gutsy performance against their Sky Bet League 2 opponents but it wasn' t enough and the Cobblers progressed to a 2nd round tie at either Scunthorpe United or Grimsby Town.

Stortford, under pressure at the start of each half, played some entertaining football once they had settled. However, two goals inside seven second half minutes after the hour mark by the visitors left the Blues with a mountain to climb. A great shot from Reece Prestedge that found the net with nine minutes left paved the way for a grandstand finish from the hosts but late pressure just failed to produce an equaliser and a resultant replay.

As expected Sean Francis returned to the heart of the defence in place of the suspended George Allen whilst Nicky Symons also returned to Rod Stringer 's starting line-up with Anthony Church also serving a suspension.

Northampton started at a high tempo with their policy clearly to send high balls into the Stortford penalty area as much as possible so that Blues ' keeper Joe Wright saw plenty of action in the early stages. In the very first minute Town 's Chris Hackett fired in a free-kick from the right that evaded everyone before whipping past the far post. Then a Danny Emerton corner on the left found Mathias Kouo-Doumbe towards the far post and his bouncing header deflected off of Johnny Herd on the goal-line and over the bar.

In the 8th minute Joe Wright, diving to his right, blocked away a shot from Luke Norris after Chris Hackett had crossed in from the right and two minutes later the Stortford stopper got down quickly to keep out a shot from an angle by loan striker Jacob Blyth.

Another loan player for Northampton, Kane Ferdinand, headed against the Stortford bar in the 20th minute and within a minute at the other end, in the Blues first threatening attack, Sean Francis also headed against the bar from close range following a centre from the right by Cliff Akurang.

Play was now moving from end to end and in the 24th minute Joe Wright produced a fine save at the foot of an upright to stop Luke Norris ' shot on the turn from 15 yards. A minute later Kyle Vassell went on a searching run in the inside left channel before sending a rising attempt past the near post. The Cobblers ' best player, Chris Hackett, then narrowly missed out when, after receiving the ball out wide on the right from Robbie Ravenhill, his high cross-cum-shot drifted wide of an un-guarded goal as Joe Wright sprinted off his line.

Danny Emerton tried a 25 yard effort that was close but the Blues were building up momentum and in the 37th minute Reece Prestedge 's surging run on the left flank was foiled by successive blocks by defenders as the Stortford skipper tried to cross the ball into the middle. A late Northampton attack a couple of minutes before the break saw a glancing header from Luke Norris go wide of the far post.

Half-time: 0-0

The visitors were again the more dominant side on the restart and when Tommy Fletcher lost possession in the 48th minute Luke Norris gained possession but Joe Wright saved the striker 's shot. Kyle Vassel 's final appearance for the Blues before his transfer to Peterborough United ended prematurely when he left the pitch with a "dead leg" and was replaced by George Sykes in the 58th minute.

On the hour, an attack down the middle by the visitors put Kane Ferdinand clear but Ashley Miller produced a great tackle to save the situation and the loose ball rolled back to Joe Wright. However, just two minutes later the visitors went ahead following a flick of the ball by Jacob Blyth into the path of DANNY EMERTON who advanced to hit a rising shot from 23 yards into the top corner of the net past Joe Wright 's full length dive (0-1).

Not long afterwards Wright saved from Norris but Town 's lead was doubled in the 68th minute. Following an attack initially on the right flank Chris Hackett took the ball across the edge of the box and then drove a shot that rebounded off of Tommy Fletcher 's shin unfortunately straight into the path of LUKE NORRIS and the striker instantly found the net with a low shot from 12 yards (0-2).

Northampton went close to adding to their score in the 78th minute as Emerton 's corner on the left was played short to Hackett and his cross was met by a back-header from Luke Norris that struck the top of the crossbar. Stortford were battling their way back into the match and after George Sykes saw his low effort held on his knees by Cobblers ' stopper Matt Duke the Blues halved the deficit in the 81st minute. A long throw on the right from Matt Johnson was headed on into the middle of the box by Cliff Akurang and when the Cobblers ' Chris Hackett didn 't connect properly with his clearance the loose ball came to REECE PRESTEDGE who rifled an unstoppable right footed shot high into the net from 15 yards (1-2).

The Blues now pushed forward in search of an equaliser and particularly in the six minutes of stoppage time they were close to levelling the scores. A late free-kick on the right from Matt Johnson went across the goal with Callum McNaughton agonisingly just failing to get his head to the ball at the far post and three yards from the target. Also, Cliff Akurang headed over the top in the closing seconds.

Referee Steve Martin booked two players from each side – the Blues ' Tommy Fletcher and Harry Baker and Northampton 's Lee Collins and Chris Hackett. The defeat brought to an end the Blues ' seven match winning run.

Full time: 1-2

BISHOP 'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Tommy Fletcher (sub – Kyle Asante 76 mins); Sean Francis; Callum McNaughton; Matt Johnson; Nicky Symons (sub – Harry Baker 66 mins); Kyle Vassel (sub – George Sykes 58 mins); Cliff Akurang; Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Luke Milbourne, Ben Adams, Josh Fagbohun and Sam Cowler.

NORTHAMPTON TOWN: Matt Duke; Lee Collins (sub – Ben Tozer 66 mins); Joe Widdowson; Kane Ferdinand; Paul Reid; Mathias Kouo-Doumbe; Chris Hackett; Ricky Ravenhill; Jacob Blyth (sub - Ian Morris 89 mins); Luke Norris; Danny Emerton. Unused substitutes: Darren Carter; Ishmel Demontagnac, Gary Deegan, Ben McNamara and Matty Harriott.