

Saturday 2nd Nov 2013

Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Bishop's Stortford FC



Tonbridge Angels FC



Bishop 's Stortford 2 – 1 Tonbridge Angels : HT 2 - 1 : Att 573

The Skril South

Putting aside the distraction of the FA Cup tie against Northampton Town in just over a week 's time, the Blues stretched their winning run to seven with this victory over the visiting Angels at the ProKit UK Stadium. Stortford fell behind to an early goal but a strike from Reece Prestedge and an unstoppable bullet from Kyle Vassell put them ahead by the interval and it was a lead that they didn 't lose.

The very blustery conditions made for a mostly scrappy match but the Blues had the edge on proceedings for most of the ninety minutes and certainly carried the greater potency in front of goal. Cliff Akurang, although he didn 't score, caused a lot of problems for the Angels ' back-line and Anthony Church, Reece Prestedge and Matt Johnson were strong in the midfield.

The Blues were missing Sean Francis in the middle of the defence due to a slight groin strain so that Rod Stringer, celebrating his 100th competitive game in charge, brought Tommy Fletcher into the side on loan from Wycombe Wanderers and he was to have an impressive debut.

Fletcher made his mark in the 9th minute when he made an excellent tackle to foil, at the expense of a corner, a threatening run at goal by striker Nathaniel Pinney. At the other end three minutes later a short cross from the right by Cliff Akurang seemed to hit the hand of grounded Angels ' skipper Gary Elphick but Referee Carl Brook carried on play and there were few protests from the Stortford ranks.

After a spell of even play the Kent side went a goal up in the 14th minute. An attack up the right flank in which Chris Piper and Lee Browning combined ended with Piper crossing into the middle to the unmarked SHAMIR GOODWIN who shot against the bar before netting the rebound with the Blues defence slow to react (0-1).

Stortford fought back and a Reece Prestedge corner from the right in the 18th minute resulted in Callum McNaughton 's far post header being held by diving keeper Clark Masters and then, soon afterwards, Cliff Akurang shrugged off defender Gary Borrowdale to battle to win a long through ball from Tommy Fletcher and finished with a 15 yard volley narrowly past Master 's right upright.

The Blues ' equaliser came in the 27th minute. A half-cleared Stortford corner was headed forward by Matt Johnson followed by Ashley Miller to Cliff Akurang in space on the left side of the box and the striker nodded the ball across to REECE PRESTEDGE and the skipper 's volley from ten yards beat Masters' full-length dive (1-1).

Just past the half hour mark Kyle Vassell finished off a good move on the left with a cross that was headed inches over the

bar by Anthony Church. Then a flick from Vassell following a Matt Johnson centre from the right was held by Masters.

What proved to be the winning goal and another contender for “goal of the season” was scored with five minutes remaining of normal time before the break. Another raid on the left by the Blues saw Johnny Herd play the ball up to close to the angle of the area where KYLE VASELL, with defenders around him, turned swiftly and with a couple of step-overs then hit an unstoppable left footed shot past the keeper and high into the far top corner of the net grazing the underside of the bar on the way (2-1).

Either side of the interval Stortford could have extended their lead. In the two minutes of added time Anthony Church typically won a fifty/fifty ball in midfield to send Cliff Akurang away downfield but keeper Masters came out to block the striker's slightly delayed shot.

Half-time: 2-1

Then two minutes after the restart, following a good run and low centre from the right by Ashley Miller, Anthony Church turned the ball over the top from 8 yards. The Blues continued to have the better of the exchanges and in the 56th minute Matt Johnson's corner resulted in Callum McNaughton heading across goal from the back post and George Allen wasn't quite able to stretch forward enough to send the ball over the line.

Kyle Vassell went close to netting and then in the 64th minute he headed home following a well flighted ball to the edge of the box from Cliff Akurang but the goal was disallowed for offside.

A minute later Johnny Herd slipped up with a sloppy pass back but Callum McNaughton was on hand to tackle Luke Blewden as the Angels' substitute threatened to break clear from the right. Stortford, again, nearly doubled their lead in the 72nd minute after Cliff Akurang was fouled 20 yards out by defender Jon Heath but Kyle Vassell's free-kick was inches wide of the target.

In the 75th minute Matt Johnson, cutting in from the right wing, struck a shot from distance that Tonbridge stopper Masters parried out and away from danger and then three minutes later the visitors came their closest to snatching an equaliser. A cross from the right from substitute Henry Muggeridge found Chris Piper running into the area and his first time driven shot from 15 yards was excellently turned aside by Joe Wright diving to right.

A drive from Matt Johnson that was deflected for a corner was the only action of note in the later stages of the match and there were no late alarms for the Blues.

There were four bookings very late in the contest – two for the Blues with Anthony Church and George Sykes being shown yellow cards and two for the Angels – Sonny Miles and Clark Masters.

Full time: 2-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; George Allen; Tommy Fletcher; Callum McNaughton; Matt Johnson; Anthony Church; Kyle Vassell (sub – George Sykes 74 mins); Cliff Akurang (sub – Nicky Symons 90 mins); Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Kyle Asante, Harry Baker and Ben Adams.

TONBRIDGE ANGELS: Clark Masters; Chris Piper; Ryan Watts (sub – Henry Muggeridge 69 mins); Lee Browning; Gary Elphick; Jon Heath; Gary Borrowdale (sub – Sonny Miles 69 mins); David Ijaha; Nathaniel Pinney (sub – Luke Blewden 62 mins); Shamir Goodwin; Nathan Green.

Unused substitutes: Mark Lovell and Phil Appiah.