

Saturday 16th Nov 2013

Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report

Whitehawk FC

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Whitehawk 2 - 1 Bishop 's Stortford : HT 1 - 1 : Att 107

The FA Trophy 3rd Round Qualifying

Stortford 's first ever trip to Whitehawk 's Enclosed Ground won 't last long in the memory as a goal following a free-kick six minutes from the end of normal time proved to be the difference between the two sides.

Overall the Blues deserved to bring their opponents back to the ProKit UK Stadium for a replay. They had fought back from going behind to an early goal and equalised on the half-hour. Then, although not playing particularly well after the break, Stortford 's defence had little to test or worry them until they conceded the late goal. A stoppage time rally almost brought an equaliser but it didn 't materialise and it was the Brighton based Club who progressed to the next Round of the Trophy.

As anticipated Rod Stringer made a couple of changes to what, up until now, has been almost a regular starting line-up. With Kyle Vassell joining Peterborough United, Kyle Asante came in the starting eleven for the first time and he partnered Cliff Akurang up front. George Sykes ' loan from Barnet was not renewed whilst Joe Wright and Ashley Miller were rested allowing Sam Cowler and Ben Adams rare starts. George Allen returned after suspension and replaced Tommy Fletcher who was on the substitutes ' bench.

The hosts took the lead in the 6th minute with an unfortunate own goal. An attack on the left saw James Fraser spread the ball out to the wing where Alex Parsons drilled in a low acute angled cross towards the six yard box. SEAN FRANCIS, stretching to force the ball out for a corner, could only watch in horror as it deflected off his boot to skim inside Sam Cowler' s near post (1-0).

Kicking down the slope in the first half, the first threat from the Blues came in the 15th minute when a Matt Johnson free-kick from the right just grazed off the head of the oncoming Callum McNaughton at the back post to run out for a goal-kick. Stortford were now edging the match and five minutes later only a fine tackle by James Fraser on Cliff Akurang stopped the striker 's run at goal after good approach work down the middle by Matt Johnson and Reece Prestedge.

The Stortford defence was exposed in the 27th minute as David Da Silva found Danny Mills free on the right and cutting in towards goal he was denied by Sam Cowler saving well with his legs. However, only three minutes later, on the half-hour, the scores were level. A Matt Johnson corner on the left was deflected out to KYLE ASANTE who found the top of the net from a first time 15 yard volley that keeper Dillon Phillips got his hands to but couldn 't stop (1-1).

Five minutes before the break Hawks ' David Da Silva crossed from the right towards the far upright where an acrobatic flick by Danny Mills sent the ball high and wide over the bar.

In a contest that was at times very physical one of the main battles was between Cliff Akurang and vastly experienced centre back Matt Lawrence and the Whitehawk skipper was very lucky to have escaped without a caution after a heavy challenge on Akurang near the halfway line late in the first period..

Half-time: 1-1

The Sussex side had the better of the early exchanges on the restart as the Blues found it difficult to get their attacks flowing. There was a long stoppage early in the second period when David Da Silva was left prone on the ground near the Stortford penalty box. The Whitehawk player was eventually carried from the field suffering from concussion.

In the 63rd minute a fine pass from George Allen found Reece Prestedge on the right and, after taking the ball on, the skipper's low shot-cum-cross was cut out well by stopper Dillon Phillips as Kyle Asante lurked at the far post. Almost straightaway Harry Baker was brought on to replace Asante and the Blues' substitute was to play a prominent part in their attacks until the final whistle.

Just two minutes after coming on Baker, towards the far post, met a deep cross from the left by Johnny Herd and his flick seemed hit the left hand of Sami El-Abd but Referee Adrian Quelch refused Blues' appeals for a penalty. The roles were reversed in the 73rd minute when a Harry Baker centre from the right reached Johnny Herd who struck a fierce rising 20 yard effort that was narrowly wide of the near angle of the goal.

Five minutes later, with Baker causing the host's defence a few problems on the right, the substitute, after receiving a pass from Reece Prestedge, swung the ball into the middle and Cliff Akurang climbed to send a header from 15 yards inches over the bar.

But then, in the 84th minute it all went wrong for Stortford. Callum McNaughton committed a foul, for which he was booked, on Hawks' Alex Parsons out wide near the right touch-line and Hakeem Adelakun's free-kick towards the near post was met by a glancing header by SAMI EL-ABD with the Blues' defence slow to react and the ball finished inside the upright (2-1).

Rod Stringer brought on Josh Fagbohun for his first appearance in a Stortford shirt and the Blues piled forward in the remaining time which included six added minutes. Keeper Phillips was off his line quickly to hold the ball in front of Reece Prestedge when George Allen had laid the ball forward into the penalty box and then a floated attempt at goal from Cliff Akurang was held by the Hawks' custodian under the bar.

Stortford's last attack of the tie resulted in a deep cross from the right by Harry Baker producing a far post header by Cliff Akurang that was saved at the foot of his post by the diving Phillips. The Blues will be looking for a much better performance and result when they return to the same venue for the Skril South encounter in seven days' time. As well as cautioning Callum McNaughton, Referee Quelch also yellow carded Sami El-Abd.

Full time: 2-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Sam Cowler; Ben Adams (sub – Josh Fagbohun 86 mins); Johnny Herd; George Allen; Sean Francis; Callum McNaughton; Matt Johnson; Nicky Symons; Kyle Asante (sub – Harry Baker 64 mins); Cliff Akurang; Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Ashley Miller, Tommy Fletcher and Luke Milbourne..

WHITEHAWK: Dillon Phillips; Michael Boateng; Sami El-Abd; Hakeem Adelakun; Matt Lawrence; Tom Cadmore; David Da Silva (sub – Lee Hills 54 mins); Danny Mills; Alex Parsons; James Fraser (sub – Sam Gargan 77 mins); Tommy Fraser.

Unused substitutes: Jake Robinson and Chris Winterton.