

Saturday 21st Dec 2013

Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Bishop's Stortford FC



Basingstoke Town FC



Bishop 's Stortford 5 – 3 Basingstoke Town : HT 2 - 0 : Att 357

The Skril South

Skrill South action returned to the ProKit UK Stadium after a seven week absence and this eight goal thriller was worth the wait. Played in poor weather conditions with a strong wind and driving rain for most of the match, the Blues looking sharp and dangerous throughout most of the ninety minutes and had built a two goal lead by the break through a Liam Enver-Marum brace. The visitors, though, never gave up and threatened to overhaul Stortford's lead but a Cliff Akurang second half double plus a Sean Francis header kept the Blues in front at the final whistle. The victory took Stortford back into the "play off" places.

The fixture saw the debuts for the Blues of midfielders Andre Costa and Jack Edwards with the former in the starting eleven and the latter, on loan from Southend United, coming on as a substitute late in the game. Also, Johnny Herd made a welcome return to the side following his fractured hand although one negative from the match was that the defender had to leave the field with twenty minutes left due to receiving a nasty leg injury after a 50/50 challenge with Basingstoke's Robbie Rice.

Right from the first whistle the contest flowed from end to end with Stoke, making some direct incisive attacks looking particularly dangerous. Inside the first minute a cross from the left by Jordace Holder-Spooner fell to Shaun McAuley as Callum McNaughton slipped and McAuley's shot was well saved by Joe Wright diving to his left and turning the ball round the post.

Cliff Akurang went close for the Blues but when Manny Williams put Kezie Ibe through on goal it was again Joe Wright who rescued his side with a fine stop. Then in the 12th minute Williams was sent clear but shot inches wide of the post.

In the following minute, at the other end, skipper Reece Prestedge looked to be pushed in the area but Referee Carl Brook gave no penalty and in the 17th minute Stortford were in trouble again when Sean Francis lost possession. Shaun McAuley broke in the inside right channel but saw his drive at goal beaten away by Wright.

It was a little against the run of play that Stortford went ahead in the 23rd minute. Newcomer Andre Costa played his part by sending a cross-field pass out to the left to Johnny Herd and from his first time centre to the far post Cliff Akurang nodded the ball down for LIAM ENVER-MARUM to poke into the net from six yards and register his first goal for the Blues (1-0).

Around the half-hour mark Manny Williams, with an angled effort forced another excellent save from Joe Wright whilst Matt Johnson hit a superb low 30 yarder that the diving Stoke stopper Louis Wells turned round his upright.

The Blues doubled their lead in the 32nd minute. Stortford's attack originated in the middle of the park with Matt Johnson finding Cliff Akurang who switched play out to the left for LIAM ENVER-MARUM to collect. The striker then produced a masterly

goal by lofting the ball from an acute angle over keeper Wells and into the opposite top corner of the net (2-0).

A minute before the interval Andre Costa nearly got his name on the score-sheet after receiving a pass from Reece Prestedge and firing a shot from the edge of the box that just curled past Wells' right-hand post.

Half-time: 2-0

The Hampshire side were back in the match two minutes after the restart. Jordace Holder-Spooner crossed from the left and Kezie Ibe's effort at goal was blocked by Joe Wright but SHAUN McAULEY slotted in the loose ball from close range (2-1).

Stortford bounced back to regain their two goal advantage in the 53rd minute following a foul on Matt Johnson near the left angle of the box. The midfielder took the free-kick himself and although Wells made a fine stop close to the near post CLIFF AKURANG shot home after a goalmouth scramble (3-1).

However, the visitors reduced the deficit again in the 56th minute. Shaun MacAuley, on the right, played the ball back to ANDREW JENKINSON who struck a 30 yard shot that dipped over Joe Wright and under the bar (3-2).

The Blues, in the midway stages of the half, looked the more likely to add to their goal tally however and Reece Prestedge, running on to a Johnny Herd pass just inside the box hit a cross-shot that was blocked for a corner by Neil Barrett and shortly afterwards, in the 61st minute, Matt Johnson found the side-netting.

Both sides made a series of substitutions before, with the match entering its later stages and the scoring looking as though it might be completed, Stortford then notched their fourth goal of the afternoon in the 82nd minute. Substitute Josh Fagbohun, who had only been on the pitch for a short time, was fouled by Adam Green towards the right touch-line and Matt Johnson's deep free-kick was powerfully headed in at the back post by SEAN FRANCIS (4-2).

Basingstoke kept plugging away and in the 85th minute celebrated their third goal as JOE WRIGHT, under pressure at his near post, could only punch Adam Green's corner from the right into his own net (4-3).

Any worries for Blues fans were extinguished in the 87th minute when Stortford scored the last goal of an eventful contest. Following an attack on the left Reece Prestedge headed on from Matt Johnson and CLIFF AKURANG, sliding forward, stretched a left boot to volley past Wells (5-3).

The visitors went close to adding to their tally of goals in the final minute of normal time as Shaun McAuley blazed over the top and then in the four minutes of stoppage time Manny Williams saw his effort tipped over the bar by Joe Wright.

Neither side received a caution.

Full time: 5-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd (sub – Tommy Fletcher 70 mins); George Allen; Sean Francis; Callum McNaughton; Matt Johnson; Andre Costa (sub – Jack Edwards 74 mins); Liam Enver-Marum (sub – Josh Fagbohun 78 mins); Cliff Akurang; Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Ben Adams and Harry Baker.

BASINGSTOKE TOWN: Louis Wells; Robbie Rice; Adam Green; Neil Barrett; Jay Gasson; David Ray; Andrew Jenkinson; Shaun McAuley; Kezie Ibe (sub – Robbie Matthews 76 mins); Manny Williams; Jordace Holder-Spooner (sub – Simon Dunn 70 mins).

Unused substitutes: Wesley Daly, Ross Adams and Joe McDonnell.