

Thursday 26th Dec 2013

# Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Chelmsford City FC



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Chelmsford City 2 - 1 Bishop 's Stortford : HT 2 - 0 : Att 728

## The Skril South

Two first half goals from City striker Luke Callander set the hosts on the road to victory at the Melbourne Park Stadium against a well below par Blues side that for most of the game looked a shadow of the team that had beaten Basingstoke Town just five days previously. Such was Chelmsford 's dominance in the first half that Stortford would have been happy to settle for the two goal deficit at the break. The home side continued to have the edge until eleven minutes from time when a Liam Enver-Marum header found the back of the net and then Stortford could well have snatched an equaliser in a very late rally against an increasingly nervous defence. Twice in the closing minutes the ball was cleared off the Chelmsford goal-line and in the end the Essex side, happy to hear the final whistle, hung on to the points.

The Boxing Day date in the calendar seems to be an unlucky one for Stortford as they have rarely got a result in their favour recently on that Holiday date and this was the third successive defeat on the 26<sup>th</sup> December.

With Sean Francis serving a one match suspension and Johnny Herd missing due to a leg injury Rod Stringer was forced to make changes. Fielding a 4-4-2 formation his team included Ben Adams on the right of the defence and Nicky Symons returned to the midfield. The Clarets included former Blues keeper Carl Pentney and young winger Aaron Greene who had featured for Stortford in a few matches at the end of last season.

There was little between the two sides at the start on a difficult pitch. Cliff Akurang almost benefitted from an error in the first minute by City defender Leon Redwood but the Blues striker was stopped as he was about to shoot by a last ditch tackle by central defender Rory McAuley. At the other end Luke Callander released Aaron Greene on the left and Joe Wright had to fling himself to his left to push away the winger 's cross.

Cliff Akurang was in the picture again in the 6<sup>th</sup> minute collecting a short cross from the right by Liam Enver-Marum close to goal but a defender closed him quickly to block the shot. Joe Wright had to save at the foot of his right-hand upright when City skipper Mark Hughes struck a 20 yard low drive goalwards and the hosts were beginning to take control when they went ahead in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute. A long cross-field pass out of defence by Christian Smith found Joe Ward on the right and despite the attentions of Ashley Miller he cut inside and laid the ball across for LUKE CALLANDER to blast a first time rising shot from 16 yards past Wright and inside the far post ( 1-0 ).

For the remainder of the half the Blues, waiting for things to happen, were forced to play second fiddle as they could rarely get their game together with the ball no sooner being cleared away from defence than it was coming back to them with the midfield unable to get a grip on proceedings. A couple of corners were conceded from which the hosts nearly extended their lead before the second goal was scored. In the 25<sup>th</sup> minute, following an attack on the left Aaron Greene set LUKE CAL-

LANDER on track for goal in the inside left channel. The Chelmsford number nine seemed to lose possession of the ball on his run but it rebounded back to him off of Callum McNaughton and he struck it first time on the half-volley low past Joe Wright and inside the post (2-0).

The Chelmsford striker was close to completing a hat-trick three minutes later as he picked up a pass from the right by Joe Ward and saw his strong shot pushed over the bar by Wright. The Clarets, looking much livelier than the Blues, continued to press and at one time forced four successive corners.

The closest that Stortford came to scoring in the first half was during the one minute 's stoppage time when, following an attack, Liam Enver-Marum laid the ball back to Nicky Symons and the midfielder 's 25 yard effort was turned round the foot of the post by Carl Pentney.

Half-time: 2-0

The hosts were still on top on the restart but weren 't quite so threatening as before the interval. The Blues were stringing a few attacks together and following a move in the 56<sup>th</sup> minute Andre Costa tried a shot from the edge of the box that deflected off a defender and over the bar for a corner. Harry Baker was the Blues ' first substitute to enter the fray when he came on for Nicky Symons in the 58<sup>th</sup> minute and he soon began to have an effect on the right wing.

However, it was Chelmsford 's Matt Lock who nearly scored a third for the home side in the 69<sup>th</sup> minute with a long range attempt that Joe Wright saved well at his right upright. Although Carl Pentney had been largely untroubled during the second half, the Blues were increasingly pushing the City defence back and, in the 79<sup>th</sup> minute, they halved the deficit. After receiving the ball from Cliff Akurang, Harry Baker sent a great cross over from the right towards the far post where LIAM ENVER-MARUM headed the ball wide of and past Pentney from close range (2-1).

With Chelmsford defending deeper and deeper and looking decidedly vulnerable and nervous the Blues were set up for a grandstand finish. In the 86<sup>th</sup> minute Matt Johnson saw his shot from outside the box held by Pentney and then in the last minute or so of normal time and the four added minutes the home goal bore a charmed life. A corner on the right from Reece Prestedge was headed goalwards by substitute Josh Fagbohun and defender Leon Redwood headed out from under the bar. Then another Prestedge flag-kick resulted in Callum McNaughton 's far post header being scrambled off the line at the upright by Redwood.

The last action of the afternoon saw Harry Baker swing another cross towards the back post and this time Reece Prestedge sent his header agonisingly inches wide of the target. For a holiday match that could also be classified as a local derby the game was surprisingly devoid of any controversial moments and Referee Gary Jerden didn 't issue any cards.

Full time: 2-1

BISHOP 'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ben Adams (sub – Josh Fagbohun 73 mins ); Ashley Miller (sub – Tommy Fletcher 76 mins ); George Allen; Callum McNaughton; Nicky Symons (sub – Harry Baker 58 mins ); Matt Johnson; Andre Costa; Liam Enver-Marum; Cliff Akurang; Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Jack Edwards and Sam Cowler.

CHELMSFORD CITY: Carl Pentney; Sam Long; Leon Redwood; Matthew Lock; Rory McAuley; Christian Smith; Joe Ward (sub – Nicky Nicolau 81 mins ); Mark Hughes; Luke Callander (sub – Terry Amass 76 mins ); Kieron St Aimie; Aaron Greene (sub – Bagasan Graham 85 mins ).

Unused substitutes: Rob Edmans and Tommy Forecast.