

Saturday 1st Feb 2014

# Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Bath City FC



Bishop's Stortford FC



Bath City 2 - 1 Bishop 's Stortford : HT 1 - 1 : Att 547

## The Skril South

There was a sense of frustration for the second time in a fortnight as Stortford returned from an away fixture after a good performance but pointless. There was more a case for the Blues deserving at least a point at Mayday Trust Park than at Ebbsfleet two weeks previously when the scoreline was the same. After going behind early on the Blues had recovered quickly to equalise and had much the better of exchanges up until the break and then had continued to have the edge in the second half but were beaten by a goal ten minutes from the end of normal time.

It wasn't Stortford's day as, playing with an already weakened side, they had keeper Sam Cowler stretchered off with ruptured ankle ligaments late on.

Rod Stringer's squad was without Sean Francis with a thigh strain and Cliff Akurang through illness as well as Johnny Herd and Reece Prestedge was serving the last match of his suspension. The Blues' line-up included Jordan Lockie at right back and new loan signing from Peterborough United Michael Richens in midfield. The debutant had an excellent scoring first match.

On a pitch that was a little bobbly but otherwise surprisingly good Stortford made a bright start kicking down the slope. In the 5<sup>th</sup> minute Harry Baker, operating on the left cut in to fire a low shot that City stopper Jason Mellor turned round the near post for a corner and then following another flag-kick, this time on the right, from Matt Johnson a header from Callum McNaughton was cleared off the line by Noah Keats.

It was NOAH KEATS who gave the Romans the lead in the 9<sup>th</sup> minute. Adam Connolly's crossfield pass out to the left found Andy Watkins who advanced and centred for the onrushing Keats to find the corner of the net from ten yards (1-0).

Watkins and Connolly went close for the hosts soon afterwards but Stortford made several promising raids before equalising in the 20<sup>th</sup> minute. Harry Baker was fouled out on the left by defender Dan Bowman and Matt Johnson whipped in the free-kick towards the near post and a flick on from Brian Woodall was met by MICHAEL RICHENS who shot first time low into the net from 12 yards (1-1).

Stortford began to take control of proceedings with skipper Matt Johnson and Michael Richens at the heart of the impetus. In total, in the first half, they forced eight corners all of which had the City defence in trouble. A deep dipping cross by Richens by the right touch-line in the 29<sup>th</sup> minute was tipped over the bar by keeper Jason Mellor.

Three minutes later City's Ben Adelsbury headed narrowly wide as Sam Cowler came off his line to try to punch away an Aaron Brown free-kick but the final ten minutes prior to the interval saw the Blues in a good spell. In the 35<sup>th</sup> minute Matt Johnson released Brian Woodall to cut in from the right but on the edge of the box the striker delayed his shot that was finally blocked by Bath skipper Andy Gallinagh. Then a corner from Johnson reached Michael Richens whose shot on the turn was inches wide and a speculative 35 yard effort from the same player was just over the target two minutes before the break..

Half-time: 1-1

Richens was in the action early after the resumption when an awkward low distance attempt from him was pushed out round the upright at full length by Mellor.

The match continued at a fast entertaining pace although Stortford were now having to face the deteriorating elements as a heavy rain and sleet shower arrived. On the hour Noah Keats put the speedy Andy Watkins through from the right but Sam Cowler parried the ball out of danger.

Following a Matt Johnson free-kick into the box in the 69<sup>th</sup> minute George Allen rose to head into the net only for the Assistant Referee to raise his flag to rule out the goal. Shortly afterwards substitute Liam Enver-Marum finished off a move with a low short cross into the six yard box with keeper Mellor nowhere but defender Dan Bowman cleared near the line. Michael Richens again saw a lot of the ball and, in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute, when he slipped a pass down the middle Liam Enver-Marum struck a rising shot just wide.

Stortford's afternoon took a turn for the worse in the 80<sup>th</sup> minute when the Romans broke downfield to score the clincher. The hosts had looked increasingly menacing in their raids from the right flank and when a long searching pass from Andy Gallinagh reached Ross Stearn on that side of the pitch the substitute made tracks for goal. The substitute's shot was blocked by Sam Cowler but the ball ran loose to NOAH KEATS who found the net from 15 yards (2-1).

The Blues had to push forward to try to get something from the match and were liable to get caught on the counter-attack and Keats nearly notched a hat-trick minutes later when his drive from the edge of the box was well parried out by Cowler.

The closest that Stortford came to rescuing a point before the end was after a flick on by substitute Josh Fagbohun found Liam Enver-Marum but the striker's attempt on the turn from 18 yards screwed away from the far upright.

In the 87<sup>th</sup> minute Callum McNaughton missed a clearance that Andy Watkins fastened on to but Cowler again blocked the shot away. But then just a minute later City substitute Scott Wilson broke on the left and Cowler rushed off his line to intercept outside the area. However, there was a clash of legs that left the Blues keeper in a heap and after several minutes he was carried off on a stretcher to be replaced by Joe Wright. For his part in the incident Wilson was shown a yellow card.

There was nearly ten minutes of added time at the end of the match because of Cowler's injury but Stortford were unable to come close to an equaliser and Scott Wilson nearly added a third goal for Bath when he ran clear again but Joe Wright scrambled the shot away for a corner.

As well as Wilson, Referee Anthony Serrano also booked City's Keats and Chris Allen whilst Blues' Matt Johnson collected a yellow card in added time at the end of the first half.

Bath's victory meant that they had completed the "double" over Stortford having won by an identical scoreline on the opening day of the campaign at the ProKit UK Stadium. The result also meant that City leapfrogged over the Blues in the Skrill South table albeit they have played an extra four matches.

Full time: 2-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Sam Cowler (sub – Joe Wright 90 + 4 mins); Jordan Lockie (sub – Josh Fagbohun 82 mins); Ashley Miller; George Allen; Callum McNaughton; Michael Richens; Matt Johnson; Anthony Church; Brian Woodall; Harry Baker (sub – Liam Enver-Marum 64 mins); Jake Hall.

Unused substitutes: Andre Costa and Luke Milbourne.

BATH CITY: Jason Mellor; Dan Bowman; Aaron Brown; Andy Gallinagh; Mark Preece; Ben Adelsbury; Chris Allen (sub – Ross Stearn 61 mins); Adam Connolly; David Pratt (sub – Scott Wilson 81 mins); Andy Watkins; Noah Keats.

Unused substitutes: Josh Low, Joe Burnell and Jim Rollo.