

Sat 29th Mar 2014

# Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



Gosport Borough FC



Bishop's Stortford FC



Gosport Borough 2 - 1 Bishop 's Stortford : HT 1 - 0 : Att 1010

## The Skril South

Stortford's first ever visit to Borough's Privett Park won't be remembered with any satisfaction as they lost by the odd goal in three and had every reason to be aggrieved by crucial decisions by Referee Mark Pottage. The previous week's FA Trophy Finalists' first goal came from the penalty spot after Callum McNaughton was ruled to have fouled the hosts' Justin Bennett when the central defender had won the ball with a clean tackle. Then, just after the hour mark and with the Blues two goal behind, Ashley Miller went down just inside the angle of the box following a strong challenge by Dan Wooden. However, the Match Official showed a yellow card at the Stortford defender for simulation and then when Miller showed dissent and possibly pushed the Referee, a red card was brandished and once again the Blues were down to ten men.

Apart from being on the wrong end of the major decisions the Stortford also suffered from not settling down in the early stages of each half. In fact they only really came alive in the last quarter of an hour of the match when they were very close to snatching a point. Reece Prestedge pulled a goal back in the 86<sup>th</sup> minute and missed a great opportunity to equalise in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

There were three changes in the Stortford starting side from that which began against Weston-Super-Mare two days earlier. Ashley Miller, Johnny Herd and Anthony Church were in the eleven with Michael Richens, Ryan Melaugh and Reece Prestedge on the substitutes' bench along with Rohdell Gordon who has arrived at the ProKit UK Stadium on loan from Stevenage.

In front of a large crowd – given "pay as much as you like" admission after the Borough's excellent Trophy run to Wembley – and in breezy conditions, the hosts took advantage of Stortford's slow start. Ryan Scott had a deflected shot held by Joe Wright in the 4<sup>th</sup> minute and Danny Smith went close with an effort past the post in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute. Then Justin Bennett shot over the bar from 25 yards as Stortford through sloppy passing and a lack of cohesion gave the ball away more often than not.

When Danny Smith slipped the ball out to Lee Molyneaux on the right, the defender swung over a cross that struck the high up on the angle of the far post and bar before running to safety.

The energetic Rod Young was narrowly wide with shot past the far post following the Blues first real attack and then, in the 22<sup>nd</sup> minute, when his cross was cleared away by the defence Sam Cutler cleared the bar from the edge of the box with an instant shot.

Borough striker Justin Prior almost connected with a Brett Poate free-kick in towards the six yard box that Wright gathered and up the other end, in the 28<sup>th</sup> minute, a cross from the left by Johnny Herd fell to Anthony Church but the midfielder screwed his attempt at goal wide of the target. Stortford were, however, beginning to get more possession of the ball and in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute when Sam Cutler passed the ball up to Brian Woodall the striker turned a defender 25 yards out and then struck an angled shot from the left into the side-netting.

Three minutes later, however, the Blues fell a goal behind to a dubious penalty. Dan Wooden slipped the ball into the area from the left for Justin Bennett to take on but the striker was robbed of possession by a perfectly timed tackle by Callum McNaughton. The Stortford players couldn't believe a spot-kick had been awarded to the South Coast side but it was and BRETT POATE stepped up to blast the penalty past Joe Wright down the middle of the goal (1-0).

Gosport were close to extending their lead in the 42<sup>nd</sup> minute as Josh Carmichael's corner led to confusion in the Stortford defence and when a Sam Pearce header was deflected close to goal, Bennett's close range effort at the back stick was over the target.

Half time: 1-0

Stortford were again slow out of the blocks on the restart after the break and Gosport's Jason Prior missed a chance in the 48<sup>th</sup> minute however, only a minute later it was the same player who doubled the Borough's lead. An attack that began on the right flank cut through Stortford's defence and Justin Bennett provided the final pass for JASON PRIOR to run on and beat Wright with a shot wide of the keeper (2-0).

The Blues continued to lack fluency but managed to cause a few problems for the hosts in the minutes leading up to the hour mark. A Matt Johnson corner saw Callum McNaughton head over towards the back stick and then in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute a long ball forward was flicked on by Brian Woodall to put Rod Young clear but the striker on loan from Norwich City drove the ball over the bar from 18 yards. Another corner on the left this time from Johnny Herd was nudged on by Brian Woodall to Ashley Miller whose shot on the turn was wide.

Five minutes later came the incident that saw Ashley Miller dismissed from the pitch by Referee Pottage which left Stortford with a mountain to climb. Joe Wright was called into action in quick succession to prevent Gosport notching a third goal. A cross from the left from Dan Wooden deflected off of Sean Francis and Blues' stopper had to stretch to claw away the ball at the far upright. Soon afterwards, following a corner by substitute Dan Woodward an effort from Andy Forbes saw Wright make a flying save.

But in the last fifteen minutes or so Rod Stringer pushed his players forward and at times in the closing stages Stortford had all their players apart from Joe Wright in the Gosport half. In the 77<sup>th</sup> minute a corner from Matt Johnson fell to Brian Woodall but keeper Nathan Ashmore pushed the striker's shot away. The Blues were caught on the break just once when substitute Tim Sills slipped the ball on to Justin Bennett who struck the underside of the bar.

Eventually the Gosport lead was halved with four minutes of normal time left. A George Allen ball over the top of the Borough defence found substitute REECE PRESTEDGE running into space and the Blues' midfielder comfortably beat keeper Ashmore (2-1).

There was to be five minutes of stoppage time and in the fourth of these Stortford went so close to equalising. Substitute Ryan Melaugh went on a fine run towards the edge of the box before cracking a 20 yard shot that Ashmore produced his best save of the match diving to his left to push the ball away. It ran loose to Reece Prestedge whose attempt struck Matt Johnson who was on the ground and the rebound was flashed over the bar by Prestedge

Full time: 2-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; George Allen; Sean Francis; Callum McNaughton (sub – Reece Prestedge 58 mins); Matt Johnson; Sam Cutler; Brian Woodall; Rod Young (sub – Rohdell Gordan 65 mins); Anthony Church (sub – Ryan Melaugh 72 mins).  
Unused substitutes: Harry Baker and Michael Richens.

GOSPORT BOROUGH: Nathan Ashmore; Lee Molyneaux; Andy Forbes; Ryan Scott; Brett Poate; Sam Pearce; Josh Carmichael (sub – Dan Woodward 67 mins); Danny Smith; Jason Prior (sub – Tim Sills 67 mins); Justin Bennett; Dan Wooden (sub – Adam Wilde 74 mins).  
Unused substitutes: Jamie Brown and Mike Gosney.