

Saturday 8th Mar 2014

# Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report



**Tonbridge Angels FC**



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Tonbridge Angels 1 - 1 Bishop 's Stortford : HT 1 - 0 : Att 406

## The Skril South

Playing the first of 19 Skril South fixtures in the space of 50 days before the end of the season, the Blues brought back a point from the Longmead Stadium. It was possibly the correct result but the Angels ' goal was a controversial one as they took the lead early on with a shot that didn ' t appear to cross the line and also had a hint of offside about it. Stortford fought back and Cliff Akurang headed an equaliser with 18 minutes left.

Rod Stringer ' s squad had two players who made their debut with 19 year-old keeper Joe Lumley on loan from Queens Park Rangers in goal replacing the suspended Joe Wright and Jordan Brown who came on as a substitute late in the contest. Tonbridge included in their line-up Michael Bakare who was at Woodside Park three seasons ago and substitute Tom Collins who had a short spell with Stortford before Christmas.

In bright springlike conditions it was Stortford who made the first meaningful attack when in the 7<sup>th</sup> minute a long crossfield pass by Matt Johnson found Michael Richens on the right. The full-back drilled a low ball into the box where an Anthony Church effort was deflected wide of an upright.

However, the hosts went ahead in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute. Following an attack down the middle the Blues defence hesitated for a split second expecting an offside decision as Henry Muggeridge slipped the ball forward to CHRIS PIPER who clipped it past the oncoming Joe Lumley. George Allen made an excellent clearance as the ball was going over the line and he with other Blues players protested strongly when an Assistant Referee signalled a goal ( 1-0 ).

Stortford fought hard to overcome this blow and Reece Prestedge almost equalised in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute when the skipper cut in from the left to send a low shot skimming past the far upright. The Blues, however, looked a little disjointed before the break lacking fluency against a tight marking side desperate for points after a couple of heavy defeats.

In the 25<sup>th</sup> minute the ball ran loose in the box after Sean Francis had gone up to challenge keeper Lewis Carey for a Matt Johnson free-kick but the ball was cleared to safety and then Carey made a good stop at his near upright following a run from the left flank by Brian Woodall. Then, shortly after the half-hour mark, the Stortford number nine nodded the ball into the net after a corner had been only half cleared but an offside decision was given.

When Reece Prestedge was fouled by Muggeridge in the 35<sup>th</sup> minute Matt Johnson ' s free-kick from distance saw Carey tip the ball over the top at the angle. The Angels came back a couple of minutes later when Ryan Watts was close with a volley across the face of the Stortford goal after the ball had been laid into his path by Michael Bakare.

Another Johnson free-kick, this time to the back post was headed back across the area by Sean Francis and scrambled away for a corner after Cliff Akurang had tried to flick the ball goalwards. From the resultant flag-kick taken by Reece Prestedge keeper Carey held the ball at the second attempt from Anthony Church. At the other end, Tonbridge 's best player Chris Piper nearly doubled his tally as the first half drew to a close as he had a shot from the edge of the area parried by Lumley and a follow-up blocked.

Half-time: 1-0

Rod Stringer changed Stortford 's system on the restart with Callum McNaughton replacing Jake Hall and moving to a 3-5-2 formation. For the remainder of the match Stortford looked to have the slight edge. In the 56<sup>th</sup> minute George Allen headed narrowly wide at the near post following a Matt Johnson corner on the left. At the other end Joe Lumley had to be alert when Henry Muggeridge delivered a long curling centre in towards the edge of the box with the keeper punching the ball clear above the head of striker Nathaniel Pinney.

Both keepers were in action just after the halfway point of the match with Carey holding a low Reece Prestedge drive from 25 yards and Lumley saving likewise to cling on to save an awkward angled low shot-cum-cross from Chris Piper.

Stortford 's pressure, however, was building momentum and, just after Josh Fagbohun had come as a replacement for Brian Woodall they equalised in the 72<sup>nd</sup> minute. Originally an excellent solo run forward by Michael Richens finished with a shot that was saved at an upright by Carey but the ball was only cleared out towards the right touch-line and, after linking with Richens, Matt Johnson swung in a great cross to the far post where a lunging CLIFF AKURANG headed into the net from a few yards ( 1-1 ).

A few minutes later the hosts had a good chance to retake the lead when Mark Lovell found Luis Cumbers in space a few yards inside the area but the substitute blazed high and wide. In the closing ten minutes of normal time Michael Richens almost made himself a Stortford hero firstly after another run and shot that skimmed the outside of the post and then, in the 85<sup>th</sup> minute he struck a dipping 35 yard attempt that just cleared the bar. Former Blue, Tom Collins, who had earlier come on as a substitute had a half chance when he latched on to a Henry Muggeridge cross but Callum McNaughton closed him down well and the ball deflected away out of danger.

During four minutes of stoppage time keeper Carey held on to an angled volley from Reece Prestedge after the skipper picked up a pass from Anthony Church and then Sean Francis spread himself to make an excellent block to divert away a shot from Chris Piper after the Tonbridge goalscorer had worked himself into some space just inside the box.

Both sides had a player booked by Referee Andrew Laver – Stortford 's Anthony Church and the Angels ' Mark Lovell.

Full time: 1-1

BISHOP 'S STORTFORD: Joe Lumley; Michael Richens; Ashley Miller ( sub – Jordan Brown 78 mins ); George Allen; Sean Francis; Jake Hall ( sub – Callum McNaughton 46 mins ); Matt Johnson; Anthony Church; Brian Woodall ( sub – Josh Fagbohun 70 mins ); Cliff Akurang; Reece Prestedge.

Unused substitutes: Harry Baker and Liam Enver-Marum.

TONBRIDGE ANGELS: Lewis Carey; Chris Piper; Jon Heath; Mark Lovell; Gary Elphick; Sonny Miles; Henry Muggeridge; Lee Browning; Nathaniel Pinney ( sub – Tom Collins 77 mins ); Michael Bakare ( sub – Luis Cumbers 58 mins ); Ryan Watts ( sub – Nathan Green 51 mins ).

Unused substitutes: David Ijaha and Phillip Appiah.