

Thu 10th Apr 2014

Bishop's Stortford FC Match Report

Bishop's Stortford FC

Chelmsford City FC



Bishop 's Stortford 1 – 1 Chelmsford City : HT 0 - 0 : Att 755

The Skril South

So near yet so far. The Blues were seconds away from victory over City and revenge for the Boxing Day defeat at Melbourne Park when the visitors snatched an equaliser in the fourth minute of added time. Stortford had taken the lead through a bizarre Callum McNaughton goal with fifteen minutes of normal time left and were well worth their lead that could well have been added to in stoppage time. Then a quick break upfield by Chelmsford left the Blues defence exposed and skipper Mark Hughes levelled the scores.

Watched by Stortford's biggest Skril South crowd at the ProKit UK Stadium this campaign including the holder of the Blues' record number of appearances, Phil Hopkins, the hosts were unrecognisable compared to the side that had lost lamentably at Farnborough two days earlier. Stortford were much sharper and a true gauge on the flow of the match was that former Blue Carl Pentney, between the sticks for City, was much the busier keeper on the night than Joe Wright.

There were a couple of changes made by Rod Stringer to the side that had lost forty eight hours earlier. Callum McNaughton, who was to have an excellent match, returned to the central defence whilst Luke Milbourne slotted into the midfield to make his Skril South debut. Coming into the starting eleven for the first time he played impressively.

Stortford made a fine start and in the third minute Ashley Miller's cross from the right was struck first time, waist high, by Brian Woodall over the bar. They went closer in the 16th minute when a slide rule pass from Matt Johnson found Ashley Miller bearing down from the right and his drive hit the base of an upright. The rebound ran to Brian Woodall who blasted the ball over the bar.

Three minutes later a long clearance upfield by Joe Wright was nodded on by Cliff Akurang to Luke Milbourne and the youngster continued the move with a pass to Woodall on the left. Although the striker's shot beat Carl Pentney City central defender Harry Hickford got back to clear off the goal line.

Kieron St Aime for City was wide with a half chance from twenty yards midway through the first period but the Blues came back soon afterwards and a short corner routine on the right between Reece Prestedge and Matt Johnson saw the ball met by an unmarked George Allen and his glancing header from close to the near post went across goal with no one getting on the end of it at the far stick.

The woodwork was again struck in the 32nd minute. Brian Woodall dispossessed City's Justin Miller out on the left and turned to fire a shot from almost 40 yards that hit the top of the bar by the far angle.

Before the break Matt Johnson was close from a free-kick and then in the 43rd minute Sam Cutler finished a quick move

down the middle with a sharp shot that stung Carl Pentney's hands when parrying the ball away.

Half time: 0-0

There was little between the two sides early on the resumption but the first time the visitors' really threatened was just after the hour with Joe Ward speeding down the right and from his centre Michael Cheek planted his effort over the bar from ten yards close to the near post.

Joe Wright held on to Luke Callander's free-kick from 25 yards range soon after the Chelmsford substitute had come on and then, in the 68th minute, Cheek completed a move down the middle with Ward and Tom Davis with a shot past Joe Wright's right hand upright.

The deadlock was broken in the 75th minute after a Matt Johnson corner from the left flank. The ball bobbed around the six yard box until defender Christian Smith in trying to hammer the ball clear only succeeded in seeing his clearance rebound off CALLUM McNAUGHTON, who had his back to goal, into the back of the net (1-0).

Stortford had their chances to have widened the lead. Soon after the goal a run on the right by substitute Harry Baker ended with a cross to the far post and from a very tight angle Brian Woodall's spectacular volley bounced up and landed on the roof of the net.

It looked as though the Blues were going to hold on to the points especially as they had two further opportunities within the four minutes of added time. Firstly Ryan Melaugh's cross from the left into the middle reached Harry Baker in front of goal but defender Marlon Patterson made an important blocking intervention and a minute later Melaugh and Reece Prestedge combined to create an opening but the 15 yard shot from the Blues' skipper was brilliantly turned aside one handed by Carl Pentney.

In the last minute of added time the Essex side broke swiftly down the right and although Matt Johnson seemed to be fouled in the City break upfield play carried on with MARK HUGHES converting Michael Cheek's short cross from a few yards out to clinch the equaliser (1-1).

Referee David Rock yellow carded two players from each side with Johnny Herd and George Allen cautioned for Stortford and Kieron St Aime and Christian Smith booked for City.

Full time: 1-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; George Allen; George Allen; Luke Milbourne (sub – Harry Baker 71 mins); Matt Johnson; Sam Cutler; Brian Woodall; Cliff Akurang (sub – Ryan Melaugh 85 mins); Reece Prestedge.
Unused substitutes: Jake Hall, Josh Fagbohun and Michael Richens.

CHELMSFORD CITY: Carl Pentney; Justin Miller; Marlon Patterson; Tom Davis (sub – Matthew Lock 74 mins); Harry Hickford; Christian Smith; Joe Ward; Mark Hughes; Kieron St Aime (sub – Luke Callander 64 mins); Michael Cheek; Nicky Nicolau (sub – Aaron Greene 54 mins).

Unused substitutes: Mark Haines and Richard Avery.