

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2, CHELMSFORD CITY 3  
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

Holiday weekends this year haven't been the happiest of occasions for the Blues as after a double Conference South loss at Easter time at the back end of last season they suffered again with a defeat to Chelmsford City at a rain-sodden ProKit UK Stadium following on the defeat two days earlier at St Albans.

After a disinteresting goal-less first half the visitors then forced their way into a three goal lead in a fifteen minute spell. The Blues pulled themselves off the floor to pull two goals back but couldn't quite bag a point so that City took the local bragging rights for the time being.

Stortford's squad was the same as that which played at St Albans but Rod Stringer made several changes to the starting eleven. The City side included three players who had worn the Blues shirt – Nicky Eyre, Mark Haines and former favourite Glen Southam.

Joe Ward's drive from the edge of the box early on was not far off target for the Clarets but in a very tentative first half clear cut chances were limited. The best move for Stortford during the early exchanges was in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute when good work on the left by Mikel Suarez, Ryan Auger and Anthony Church saw the ball switched into the middle where Joe Tabiri's drive from the edge of the box was just wide.

The visitors attacked the Town end in the first half and Ward was prominent again firing a low shot goalwards in the 15<sup>th</sup> minute that Joe Wright held. However, attacks from both sides were breaking down at the edge of the areas. Eyre was called into action in the 37<sup>th</sup> minute when having to be alert to hold an Anthony Church shot from 18 yards following a Johnny Herd cross.

There was increased pressure from City leading up to the interval and in the 43<sup>rd</sup> minute Joe Wright made a good save diving to his right to turn aside a 25 yard snap shot from striker Luke Callander.

Half time: 0-0

Play continued in the same pattern on the restart with City having the edge but in the 53<sup>rd</sup> minute Ryan Auger had a shot from the edge of the box blocked following a move on the right with Ashley Miller. The visitors came back two minutes later with Michael Cheek's drive from outside the area saved by Wright at the expense of a corner.

With the conditions getting increasingly wetter Chelmsford took the lead in the 58<sup>th</sup> minute. James Love's excellent deep cross from the left found Michael Cheek towards the far post and his header fell to **LUKE CALLANDER** who netted from inside the six yard box (0-1).

The lead was doubled within ninety seconds with a swift break up an exposed Blues left flank culminating in the ball crossing the face of the goal and although Ashley Miller cleared Michael Cheek's close range shot off the line **CALLANDER** following up forced the ball over the line (0-2).

A third goal for Chelmsford almost came in the 64<sup>th</sup> minute when Cheek's cross found James Love running free but Ryan Auger running back made a fine tackle to intercept.

Rod Stringer made a double substitution in the 67<sup>th</sup> minute with George Sykes coming on to partner Mikel Suarez up front whilst Sheldon Sellears replaced Spencer McCall. However, Stortford found themselves three goals adrift in the 73<sup>rd</sup> minute. A corner on the right from Glen Southam was cleared only as far as the edge of the area where **MICHAEL CHEEK** blasted the ball low through a sea of legs and into the back of the net (0-3).

The remainder of the match saw Stortford at long last grab the initiative and threaten the City goal. In the 76<sup>th</sup> minute a Sheldon Sellears corner resulted in George Sykes' header being blocked but **ANTHONY CHURCH** scored at the second attempt from close range (1-3). Then, three minutes later Sykes, receiving a pass on the edge of the box from Sellears, was fouled by City central defender Marvin Ekpiteta and Referee Carl Fitch awarded a penalty that **MIKEL SUAREZ** duly converted sending Nicky Eyre the wrong way (2-3).

Although they had most of the possession for the remainder of the match Stortford couldn't manage an equalising goal. The nearest they came was when a long throw on the right from Johnny Herd eluded everyone including a flying George Sykes with the ball just eluding the substitute's head. The ball eventually passed out of play past the far upright.

Referee Carl Fitch showed yellow cards during the match to the Blues' Anthony Church and George Allen and the Clarets' Lee Sawyer and Mark Haines.

Full time: 2-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Danny Fitzsimons; Joe Tabiri; George Allen; Phil Anderson (sub – George

Sykes 67 mins); Ryan Auger (sub – Ryan Melaugh 81 mins); Anthony Church; Mikel Suarez; Spencer McCall (sub – Sheldon Sellears 67 mins); Johnny Herd.

Unused substitutes: Ishmael Kamara and Harry Baker.

CHELMSFORD CITY: Nicky Eyre; Rob Girdlestone; James Love; Mark Hughes; Mark Haines; Marvin Ekpiteta; Lee Sawyer; Glen Southam; Luke Callander; Michael Cheek; Joe Ward.

Unused substitutes: Christian Smith, Rohdell Gordon, Harry Morgan, Hugo Skepelhorn and Niklas Freund.

Attendance: 604