

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2014

WESTON SUPER MARE 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1  
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

An opportunist goal by Ryan Melaugh taking advantage of a defensive error in the early seconds of time added on at the end of the match brought home maximum points from the Blues' long trip to the Somerset coast. Up until that point the contest had all the hallmarks of ending in 0-0 stalemate as both sides had difficulty in carving out openings against well organised defences.

Stortford's victory at the Woodspring Stadium was the first on the opening day of a league campaign since 2010 when they beat Eastleigh 2-1.

Although the hosts had more of the match territorially in the first half and posed a few problems Manager Rod Stringer could be well pleased with his side's performance overall as his side settled after the break and a disciplined display culminated with the winning goal. The Stortford line-up had newcomer Will de Havilland in the right back berth as Ashley Miller was still nursing a knee problem whilst with Declan Hunt suffering with flu Spencer McCall played in one of the midfield positions. With Jake Larkins leaving the Club there was a new face on the bench in Sam Baxter being the substitute goalkeeper.

There was caution from both sides in the early stages but the Seagulls' sharp right winger Joe McClennan was soon prominent and in the third minute he provided the pass for Bradley Ash to run to the edge of the box and unleash a rising shot that struck the Blues' crossbar.

Stortford's first foray into Weston territory came in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute when George Allen launched a long pass out to the left for Ryan Melaugh to carry into the box and when the ball ran loose, home keeper Luke Purnell grabbed it as Spencer McCall threatened. Then in the 20<sup>th</sup> minute Joe Tabiri's centre from the left was missed by Purnell when the keeper went up for the ball with Anthony Church and it fell to Sheldon Sellears at the back post but the midfielder's effort from an almost impossible angle was wide.

Sellears also featured as the half hour mark approached when he cut into the area from the right and appeared to be shoved off the ball by central defender Jake Mawford but Referee Simon Knapp was disinterested.

The Blues first corner came in the 34<sup>th</sup> minute but Spencer McCall's flag kick came to nothing.

The hosts had the majority of the play territorially at this stage but they found the Stortford defence well organised with Phil Anderson building up a good understanding with George Allen at the back.

However, it was George Allen's poor clearance upfield two minutes before the break that put Stortford's goal under threat. Joe McClennan collected the ball and advanced down the inside right channel before unleashing a 20 yard drive that was beaten away by Joe Wright. This was in fact the only time in the ninety minutes that the Stortford stopper was seriously tested.

Half time: 0-0

The Blues got off to a good start in the second half and in the 50<sup>th</sup> minute an attack on the left involving Anthony Church and Spencer McCall ended with a pass inside from the latter to Ryan Melaugh whose first time shot from 15 yards was held by Purnell at the near post.

Five minutes later the hosts' Alec Fiddes volleyed high and wide towards the far post following a deep cross from Conor O'Sullivan but Stortford were getting a grip of midfield and they were close to opening their account a couple of minutes later when Sheldon Sellears crossed in low from the right and it was only a deflection for a corner from a defender's boot that prevented Mikel Suarez connecting with the ball in front of goal.

Then, in the 63<sup>rd</sup> minute, Will de Havilland's cross from the right towards the near post produced a volley by Anthony Church that Purnell caught comfortably near his left hand upright.

The Seagulls' Management used up their full quota of substitutions as the game entered its closing stages but Stortford remained unchanged and three minutes from time Mikel Suarez stretched to head wide at the far post from a Johnny Herd cross.

It looked as though both sides would have to share the points but the game was just into in the opening seconds of added time when the Blues struck to clinch all the spoils. **RYAN MELAUGH** was alert just outside the box on the right hand side of the pitch to gain possession of a misdirected pass from a defender meant for Weston skipper and centre back Tom Jordan. The young midfielder, who had a fine pre-season, took the ball into the box and then slotted a low angled shot past keeper Purnell into the far bottom corner of the net (0-1).

The Blues had no problems seeing out the remaining four minutes of added time to bring home the points.

There was a yellow card from Referee Knapp for each side with Joe Tabiri collecting a first half booking for a foul on Dayle Grubb and Tom Jordan, son of Leeds and Scotland legend Joe, cautioned for a late challenge on Spencer McCall just before the final whistle.

Full time: 0-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Will de Havilland; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; George Allen; Phil Anderson; Sheldon Sellaars; Anthony Church; Mikel Suarez; Spencer McCall; Ryan Melaugh.  
Unused substitutes: Jamie Guy, Josh Fagbohun. Luke Milbourne, Rio Bryan-Edwards and Sam Baxter.

WESTON SUPER MARE: Luke Purnell; Conor O'Sullivan; Jake Llewellyn; Jake Mawford; Tom Jordan; Oliver Barnes; Joe McClennan; Bradley Ash; Jacob Cane (sub – Jamie Lucas 69 mins); Dayle Grubb (sub – Matthew Thorne 83 mins); Alec Fiddes (sub – Syd Camper 71 mins).  
Unused substitutes: Liam Dempsey and Jake Harris.

Attendance: 193