

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, BATH CITY 1  
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

With both sides needing points to climb away from the lower regions of the Vanarama Conference South table neither would have been satisfied with a 1-1 stalemate at the ProKit (UK) Stadium.

Stortford started well taking the lead in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute and looking the better outfit but once the visitors had equalised a minute or so before the break it was they that had the edge until the end. Both the Blues and the Romans almost clinched all the points in the closing fifteen minutes but it finished all square at the final whistle.

Rod Stringer's starting eleven was the same which had taken a point from the midweek trip to Concord Rangers and in addition striker Mikel Suarez was on the bench having recovered from the dead leg sustained against Basingstoke Town the previous Saturday. City were coming into the match fresh from a 2-1 victory at Wealdstone the previous Tuesday.

The Blues, attacking the Airport end looked positive and set a good pace from the start and went ahead in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute. Originally George Sykes was fouled wide on the right by Pat Keary for which the defender was shown a yellow card by Referee Antony Coggins. George Allen just failed to connect with Sheldon Sellears' free-kick and the ball went out of play for a corner on the left which resulted in another flag kick on the other side from which Stortford scored. Sellears and Ryan Auger worked a short corner routine and when the latter whipped in a cross towards the six yard box skipper **ANTHONY CHURCH** flicked the ball into the far corner of the net (1-0).

City's Ashley Kington struck a speculative shot that was narrowly wide of Joe Wright's right upright and Ross Stearn had a shot that was held by the Stortford stopper. However the Blues looked the stronger team for most of the first half and in the 36<sup>th</sup> minute nearly added to their lead following a free-kick from Sellears on the right that was back heeled by Joe Tabiri to Ryan Auger and the midfielder's 23 yard first timer was well saved by keeper Jason Mellor who pushed the ball aside. The loose ball was netted by Anthony Church but the goal was over-ruled due to an offside decision being given.

In the last minute of normal time before the interval there was a long stoppage when Bath's Chris Allen collapsed to the ground near the halfway line with a serious knee injury and had to be stretchered off. Almost immediately after the delay the visitors attacked swiftly and

striker **DAVID PRATT** collected a pass 20 yards and without being tightly marked turned to a smash a rising shot into the net via the underside of the bar (1-1).

Half time: 1-1

The City goal was a defining moment in the match as Stortford never really played as confidently again during the contest.

The Romans had the edge for most of the remainder of the game. Four minutes after the restart Ross Stearn's free-kick was held low down by Joe Wright. Midway through the half George Allen's far post header from another Sheldon Sellears' corner was held under the bar by Bath keeper Jason Mellor. Shortly afterwards Rod Stringer made two substitutions in the space of five minutes with Mikel Suarez replacing Rod Young and Harry Baker coming on for Ryan Auger.

The visitors looked dangerous when they attacked and Joe Wright had to speed off his line to take the ball at Andy Watkins' feet just inside the box after the striker had chased a through pass from substitute Elliott Gibbons in the 73<sup>rd</sup> minute. A minute later at the other end Mellor had to stretch himself to gain possession of the ball at the second attempt following a Harry Baker centre from the right.

There were then a couple of Stortford attacks that nearly produced a winner. Firstly in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute a long throw from Johnny Herd on the left towards the near post saw a Mikel Suarez back header hit the base of the far upright and rebound to safety and then two minutes later George Sykes crossed from the right and when Sheldon Sellears squared the ball on to Suarez the substitute's low shot from towards the far post lacked power and Mellor collected the ball comfortably.

Bath's last meaningful attack ten minutes from the end of normal time carried a threat with David Pratt in possession on the right and when his cross reached substitute Chas Hemmings some ten yards out his attempt at goal was headed off the line by George Allen.

The Blues pushed forward to create pressure on the Bath goal in the three minutes of added time but were unable to create any clear cut chances to clinch a winning goal.

As well as City's Pat Keary Referee Anthony Coggins also cautioned the visitors' Dan Bowman and Dan Ball during the match.

Full time: 1-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; George Allen; Danny Fitzsimons; Ryan Auger (sub – Harry Baker 70 mins); Anthony Church; Rod Young (sub – Mikel Suarez 65 mins); George Sykes (sub – Spencer McCall 86 mins); Sheldon Sellears.  
Unused substitutes: Ryan Melaugh and Phil Anderson.

BATH CITY: Jason Mellor; Dan Bowman; Dan Ball; Sekani Simpson; Andy Gallinagh; Ashley Kington; Ross Stearn (sub – Bobbie Dale 62 mins); Chris Allen (sub – Elliott Gibbons 45 mins); David Pratt; Andy Watkins (sub – Chas Hemmings 76 mins); Pat Keary.  
Unused substitute: Jim Rollo.

Attendance: 354