

Saturday 30th August 2014

HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

The Blues recorded their first victory since the opening day of the season following a solid and organised display. Joe Tabiri, scoring his first goal for the Club, had given Stortford a first half lead and then they brought home the points with a gritty and strong defensive performance to counter the Hawks pressure after the break and particularly in the final twenty minutes.

After four successive straight losses at Westleigh Park this win was Stortford's first on Havant territory since March 2008.

Rod Stringer tried a slightly different team set up with Rod Young, formerly with Norwich City now of Welling United, coming in on loan. The striker's pace worried Havant's back line and with Mikel Suarez playing in a more withdrawn role the effect seemed to be that Stortford's formation had a more positive look about it than in the previous game against Chelmsford.

All round the Blues looked more confident. In defence Ashley Miller and the central pairing of George Allen and Danny Fitzsimons gave little away whilst goalscorer Joe Tabiri had his best match so far and skipper Anthony Church and Sheldon Sellears did well in midfield.

Both sides had efforts just off target in the first half hour. In the third minute Scott Donnelly was close past the post with a shot after Havant had worked a short corner routine. Then, a minute later Ryan Auger after linking with Rod Young tried an attempt at goal from outside the box that was inches over the bar.

Stortford continued their useful start with some promising moves but the Hampshire side were having more shots at goal. Ben Swallow's shot from the edge of the box was wide and then JJ Hooper fired a low shot in the 14th minute from 15 yards that was straight at Joe Wright. For the Blues, who were kicking down the slope in the first half, Sheldon Sellears struck a drive just wide after a run on goal after being supplied with a pass from Church in the 23rd minute and then Sellears was close over the bar with another drive just after the half hour mark.

The winning goal came in the 34th minute. It was goalscorer **JOE TABIRI** who started the move by winning possession some twenty yards inside his own half. Taking the ball on he then slipped the ball down the left flank for Rod Young to chase and collect. The Blues number nine cut

inside and unleashed a fierce shot that keeper Ryan Young parried down at the near post. The ball ran back to Young who nudged it back into the path of the onrushing Tabiri and the midfielder blasted high into the net inside the far angle of post and bar from ten yards (0-1).

The same combination almost doubled the lead two minutes later when Mikel Suarez played a long pass up to Young on the left and after the former Norwich City youngster laid the ball back Tabiri was foiled by a defender blocking the ball away for a corner.

With half time approaching the Hawks' Josh Huggins had a header that Jow Wright held under the bar and then when the Stortford stopper was caught out of his goal a little later Shamir Mullings' cross in towards an unguarded goal was cut out by George Allen.

Half time: 0-1

Six minutes after the break Sheldon Sellears was on another one of his runs. Supplied by a pass from Johnny Herd the midfielder was again not far off target.

The nearest that the Hawks came to equalising was in the 56th minute. Perry Ryan played the ball up to JJ Hooper whose 25 yard deflected shot rebounded off the Blues' bar.

At the other end Rod Young struck a volley that was beaten down by his namesake but Havant came back with a cross from Nic Ciardini that grazed the head of the jumping Hooper in front of goal.

The pressure from the hosts increased in the final twenty minutes. A deep centre from Ben Swallow skimmed off of Johnny Herd close to the far post for a corner and following the flag kick, substitute Alek Przespolewski's cross was headed wide by Josh Huggins.

Fifteen minutes from the end of normal time, in a rare attack from Stortford, Rod Young let fly from distance and the ball flew only a foot over the bar. But the Blues were very much on the defensive and Huggins was almost through for Havant only to screw the ball wide from a couple of yards inside the box.

There was five minutes of added time and in the first of these substitute Ed Harris fired over the top after the Blues had failed to clear an attack and then in the second minute Nic Ciardini's corner from the right produced a glancing header from Perry Ryan that flew across goal and past the far upright.

In a match that was never over physical, Referee Ian Fissenden somehow contrived to put seven names in his book. The Blues' Mikel Suarez, Johnny Herd and George Allen were shown the yellow card along with Havant's Brian Dutton, Scott Donnelly, Josh Huggins and Ryan Woodford.

Full time: 0-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Joe Wright; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; George Allen; Danny Fitzsimons; Ryan Auger (sub – Harry Baker 66 mins); Anthony Church; Rod Young (sub – George Sykes 83 mins); Mikel Suarez; Sheldon Sellears (sub – Ryan Melaugh 80 mins).
Unused substitutes: Phil Anderson and Spencer McCall.

HAVANT & WATERLOOVILLE: Ryan Young; Josh Huggins (sub – Dan Strugnell 86 mins); Daniel Blanchett; Perry Ryan; Ryan Woodford; Brian Dutton; Ben Swallow (sub – Ed Harris 86 mins); Scott Donnelly; Shamir Mullings (sub – Alek Przespolewski 63 mins); J J Hooper; Nic Ciardini.

Unused substitutes: Harry Wedlake and Warren Cummings.

Attendance: 430