

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0 TOOTING & MITCHAM UNITED 0 (FA CHALLENGE CUP – 2ND QUALIFYING ROUND)

Stortford were left frustrated by a well drilled Ryman League Division 1 South side Tooting who left the ProKit UK Stadium deserving of a draw and a replay. The Blues made another slow start and when they did liven up particularly in the final twenty minutes of the tie they went close to getting a winner but generally seemed to lack sharpness in front of goal.

As it was Blues' stopper David Gregory had to make a couple of fine saves to stop the visitors snatching a passage through to the next round especially one in the last minute of normal time when United striker Danny Summers was clear on goal.

Rod Stringer named the same starting eleven that had beaten Whitehawk the previous Saturday. The match started quietly and the rest of the half was much the same lacking a true FA Cup atmosphere.

Ryan Auger tried an angled shot from out on the left in the 8th minute that the Terrors' keeper Paul Smith held under the bar whilst the visitors forced two successive corners followed by a rapid 35 yarder from their central defender Jordan Cheadle that was only inches over the top in the 11th minute.

Mikel Suarez headed over the bar from a Ashley Miller cross before good work by Spencer McCall in the 20th minute saw the midfielder switch the ball out to the left which led to Auger striking an angled shot that finished inches wide of the far upright. Then, two minutes later, when Anthony Church was fouled outside the box Auger's free-kick deflected off the defensive wall for a corner. Sheldon Sellears' flag kick was headed narrowly over the angle by George Allen at the back stick.

Approaching the half hour a long throw from Johnny Herd was headed just wide by Ashley Miller. But the South London side were the more positive outfit at this stage and Jordan Clarke twice threatened– with a shot narrowly over and, later, a low shot held by David Gregory and then a free-kick by Jordan Cheadle wasn't far off target.

Half time: 0-0

The Blues had the momentum at the start of the second half with Sheldon Sellears finishing a run with a shot deflected into the side-netting three minutes after the restart and from his corner George Allen headed over at the far post. Shortly afterwards Mikel Suarez drove wide.

In the 57th minute Rod Stringer opted to change things up front and Suarez was replaced by Sykes and Rod Young came on as a substitute in place of Spencer McCall.

The pace of the tie had gradually picked up and the last twenty minutes was much more like an FA Cup tie. It started in the 70th minute with Tooting substitute Sol Pinnock, who had just come on to the pitch, forcing an excellent save from David Gregory with a shot from outside the box on the right that the Stortford stopper turned round the far post for a corner.

Almost immediately at the other end the Blues won a corner and, taken by Sellears, George Sykes side-foot attempt at the far upright was tipped over by Smith. The game was now really opening out and a George Allen header travelled across the six yard box with no one getting a touch before good approach play on the left by Johnny Herd and Rod Young resulted in Young playing the ball inside to Sykes whose low effort was saved by the diving Smith.

Probably the nearest that the Blues came to scoring was in the 79th minute following another cross into the box from the left by Young and first Ashley Miller had a shot blocked and Sheldon Sellears attempt from the rebound was held low down by Smith.

A minute or so later Stortford had a three on one opportunity after a quick break upfield but the wrong passing option was used and the chance wasted. The visitors' useful number nine Danny Summers then had a shot from distance from which David Gregory made a good save.

However, the better chances to break the stalemate were falling Stortford's way and there were more opportunities on the break. In the 86th minute Johnny Herd and substitute Ryan Melaugh combined on the left and Herd's cross was fired over the bar by Anthony Church. Then, following a Herd free-kick Rod Young delivered a low centre across the face of the goal with no one getting a touch.

The last chance of the tie fell to the visitors' Danny Summers in the final minute of normal time. The striker broke clear of the Blues defence who were indebted to David Gregory who made an outstanding save at the expense of a corner.

There were four added minutes at the conclusion of the match but no further chances at either end. Referee Robert Massey-Ellis cautioned two players from both sides – the Blues' Spencer McCall and Ryan Auger were booked along with United's Howard Newton and Bashiru Alimi.
Full time: 0-0

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: David Gregory, Ashley Miller, Johnny Herd, Joe Tabiri, George Allen, Danny Fitzsimons, Ryan Auger, Anthony Church, Mikel Suarez (sub – George Sykes 57 mins), Spencer McCall (sub – Rod Young 57 mins), Sheldon Sellears (sub – Ryan Melaugh 84 mins).

Unused substitutes: Phil Anderson, Harry Baker and Joe Wright

TOOTING & MITCHAM UTD: Paul Smith, Tom Jelley, Nathan Gordon, Bashiru Alimi, Jordan Cheadle, Harry Knock, Jordan Clarke (sub – Liam Wright 90 mins), Francis Quarm, Danny Summers, Billy Marshall (sub – Sol Pinnock 69 mins), Howard Newton.

Unused substitutes: Colin Hartburn, Tinashe Nkoma, Leon Alken-Simon and Harvey Cheadle.

Attendance 322