

Saturday 11th October 2014

FARNBOROUGH 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

Given Stortford's desperate previous form at the Paddy Power Park any Blues fans having a bet on their side to win before the game would have seen very long odds against a success and at 4.50pm would have travelled back home with loads of money in their pockets. In fact this win was Stortford's first ever success at Farnborough and achieved at the eleventh attempt. Their first visit was in the 1979/80 season in the Isthmian League Division 1 when they lost there 2-1 on 19th April 1980. Since then there have been nine further trips to Cherrywood Road resulting in two draws and seven losses.

It was also in some ways fitting that it was Mikel Suarez who scored the goal, from the penalty spot, as it was on this ground two years ago that he suffered a very bad head injury when playing for Tonbridge Angels.

Stortford's third victory on the road this campaign was deserved and achieved through a lot of hard graft and they looked well organised throughout the team. The hosts had more of the possession but the Blues looked more potent up front during the ninety minutes. Rod Stringer's side also obtained a rare clean sheet.

The Blues' starting line-up had Mikel Suarez up front and also Scott Shulton was in the eleven for the first time since returning to Stortford for a third spell. Both teams made slow cautious starts although it was the Boro who had the early edge with the greater possession. In the 5th minute their central defender Adam Brice headed over from a Phil Page corner on the right.

Both sides had to make early substitutions because of injuries with Matt Ball replaced Matt Bevans for the hosts whilst Rod Young came on for skipper Anthony Church who had a hamstring problem. Young's strong running soon started to cause the home defence some problems.

A Ryan Auger free-kick in the 27th minute resulted in a good save by Grant Smith in the Boro goal diving to his left and turning the ball aside for a corner. Then, when the flag kick wasn't cleared, Scott Shulton struck a rising shot that just cleared the near angle of post and bar after the ball had been nodded through to him by Auger.

Just after the half hour mark a long ball to the far post by Auger was headed over by Mikel Suarez whilst Joe Tabiri was wide of the target

from 25 yards following Rod Young heading the ball down into the midfielder's path.

Boro themselves went close in the minutes coming up to the break. Striker Jamie Slabber, who had joined the hosts on loan and had played against the Blues only four days previously for Bromley, laid the ball back to Matt Ball on the edge of the box and the substitute's effort at goal was deflected for a corner. Then in the 43rd minute when Ryan Auger lost possession of the ball in midfield to Dan Bennett the Boro player advanced to 20 yards out before slamming in a shot that David Gregory did well to save diving to his left to push the ball away for a corner.

Half time: 0-0

It was the Blues who threatened first on the restart. In the 47th minute Ryan Auger and Joe Tabiri linked to send the ball out to the right where Rod Young cut in and saw his shot kept out low down at the near post by keeper Grant Smith's left boot.

The Hampshire side came back with Matt Ball having a shot deflected wide and when Ashley Miller stumbled on the edge of his own area to let the ball run loose Alfie May flashed a drive just wide of the far upright.

George Allen almost made contact with his head when a corner from Ryan Auger came over from the right wing but on the hour the Blues made the decisive breakthrough. A fine ball in the middle from Spencer McCall spreading the ball out found Ashley Miller on the right flank advancing into the box. A clumsy challenge by Sylvester Guyonnet on the Stortford defender sent him sprawling and Referee Derek Eaton pointed straight to the spot. **MIKEL SUAREZ** stepped up for the penalty and gave Smith no chance with a shot wide of his dive into the bottom corner of the net (0-1).

As expected Boro pushed forward after this set back. Dan Bennett was close with a first time attempt clearing the bar whilst Johnny Herd had to head away near the goal-line following a Matt Ball free kick from the left.

Stortford, however, were near to extending their lead in the final fifteen minutes or so. A Ryan Auger free-kick on the left found Phil Anderson lurking towards the back post and his acute angled header finished in the side-netting. Then when the ex Southend United player again crossed the ball over to the far side of the box Ashley Miller collected the ball in space in a similar position to where he had been fouled for the penalty but he went for glory and hammered the ball wide from twelve yards.

In the 87th minute Boro substitute Mario Quiassaca headed over the target and the hosts' last chance of equalising came in the four minutes of added time when Alfie May's corner wasn't cleared and Jamie Slabber's shot on the turn from ten yards was excellently saved by David Gregory at the expense of a corner.

The match became increasingly niggly as it progressed and Referee Eaton brandished four yellow cards to Blues' players – Ryan Auger, Johnny Herd, Danny Fitzsimons and George Allen and three to Farnborough players – Lewis Ferrell, Mario Quiassac and Phil Page.

Full time: 0-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: David Gregory; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; George Allen, Danny Fitzsimons; Ryan Auger; Anthony Church (sub – Rod Young 29 mins (sub – Phil Anderson 77 mins)); Mikel Suarez; Spencer McCall; Scott Shulton (sub – Sheldon Sellaars 61 mins).

Unused substitutes: George Sykes and Ryan Melaugh.

FARNBOROUGH: Grant Smith; Matt Bevans (sub – Matt Ball 26 mins); Ollie Treacher; Sylvester Guyonnet (sub – Fejiri Okenabirhie 71 mins); Adam Brice; Lewis Ferrell; Dan Bennett; Darryl Siaw (sub – Mario Quiassaca 81 mins); Phil Page; Jamie Slabber; Alfie May.

Unused substitutes: Josh Webb and Courtney Fearn.

Attendance: 324