

Saturday 1st November 2014

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN 3
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

These two County rivals met for their first encounter in a league match for 46 years and it was the Tudors who took the honours at the ProKit UK Stadium. The Blues had by far the better of exchanges before the break and led at that stage but some sloppy defending allowed the visitors to find the net three times in the second half to take the points.

It was another frustrating afternoon for Blues supporters at Woodside particularly after the promise and positivity of the first period. Stortford weren't at full strength as along with Anthony Church's and George Allen's absences through injury they were without Ashley Miller who was at his brother's wedding. Ryan Auger filled the full back spot whilst Sheldon Sellears operated on the right side of midfield. Included amongst the substitutes was Damien Green a central defender from Stortford's under 21 set up.

Although David Gregory had to be alert in the first minute to grab a low cut back towards the six yard box from striker Oliver Thorne it was Stortford who called the early tune. A shot from Spencer McCall flashed just wide in the 7th minute and the Blues took the lead in the 11th minute after an excellent move. Mikel Suarez instigated the attack just inside the Hemel half with neat headed flick to George Sykes who switched the play out to Ryan Melaugh on the left. The ball then found its way out to Sheldon Sellears on the right and the midfielder's low cross was netted by **MELAUGH** from close range (1-0).

The visitors' Lewis Toomey was not far off target with a shot on the run in the 17th minute but Stortford with some excellent inter-passing movements had most of the possession. In the 28th minute Melaugh almost struck again when nearly intercepting a back pass whilst other promising attacks fizzled out with a lack of cutting edge that meant that Hemel stopper Laurie Walker was rarely troubled.

Half time: 1-0

Stortford were jolted four minutes after the resumption when the visitors levelled. George Sykes conceded a free-kick out towards the right flank and when Daniel Talbot sent the ball deep to the far post **OLIVER HAWKINS** rose to head past David Gregory (1-1).

The visitors were more in the match but soon after the equaliser Mikel Suarez nodded through for George Sykes to run on to and the loan striker

from Barnet did well to get round defender Moussa Diarra however Walker saved well at the near post at the expense of a corner.

Shortly afterwards. In the 56th minute, Sykes shot into the side-netting as the game opened out and the action became end to end. For Hemel Lewis Toomey wasn't far of target with a header over the bar following a cross from skipper Jordan Parkes and for Stortford Sykes was again near – this time with a volley.

Midway through the half a header from Sykes found Sheldon Sellears in space coming in from the right but his shot from the edge of the box was drilled wide of the far upright. Then in the 67th minute Mikel Suarez headed a Ryan Auger free kick goalwards and Moussa Diarra almost slid the ball into his own goal.

Sellears was just over the top with an attempt from 25 yards after a corner had been cleared out to him but with twenty minutes left on the clock the visitors went ahead for the first time. With the Blues sitting too deep Kyle Connolly sent a ball from his own half up to Lewis Toomey who knocked the ball forward for substitute **JAMES SIMMONDS** to collect just inside the box and send a flighted shot over the top of David Gregory and under the bar (1-2).

Almost straightaway the Blues missed a half chance to get back on level terms. The ball came across the six yard box and keeper Walker denied substitute Scott Shulton at the far post for a corner. Rod Stringer made a double substitution in the 74th minute as Rod Young came on for Mikel Suarez and Donovan Simmonds replaced Sheldon Sellears,

There were further near misses at both ends as a promising Blues attack in the 78th minute ended with Spencer McCall's angled shot going over whilst David Gregory did well when diving to push away a shot from Hemel substitute James Potton.

Another chance for the Blues arrived in the 81st minute when George Sykes collected a poor kick out from Laurie Walker and sent a through ball downfield for Rod Young to take on. The young substitute's shot beat Walker but crept low across the face of the goal and inches past the far post.

Instead of being level Stortford found themselves two goals behind in the 83rd minute as a result of further poor defending. A throw from the right by Ed Asafu-Adjaye found Oliver Hawkins who had time to shoot at goal and when the ball ran loose **JAMES POTTON** managed to force it into the net past Gregory (1-3).

Referee Savvas Yianni yellow carded Mikel Suarez and Ryan Auger in the second half.

Full time: 1-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: David Gregory; Ryan Auger; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; Danny Fitzsimons; Phil Anderson; Ryan Melaugh (sub – Scott Shulton 66 mins); Spencer McCall; Mikel Suarez (sub – Rod Young 74 mins); George Sykes; Sheldon Sellears (sub - Donovan Simmonds 74 mins).

Unused substitutes: Frankie Merrifield and Damien Green.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN: Laurie Walker; Ed Asafu-Adjaye; Kyle Connolly; Jordan Parkes; Jorell Johnson; Moussa Diarra; Daniel Talbot; Wes Daly; Oliver Hawkins; Oliver Thorne (sub – James Simmonds 61 mins); Lewis Toomey (sub – Jamal Lowe 81 mins).

Unused substitutes: Ian Rees and James Brighton.

Attendance: 482