

Tuesday 9th December 2014

BROMLEY 3, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

It was a case of déjà vu for Stortford as for the second successive campaign they frustratingly managed to throw away a two goal lead and lose in the closing minutes at Hayes Lane. Last season, on Easter Monday, Michael Richens and Johnny Herd had given Stortford a two goal cushion and this time around Ryan Auger and Sheldon Sellears put the Blues two ahead at the break. It was all to no avail as the hosts rattled in three before the end to deny Stortford any points.

It was fairly clear from the start that this was going to be a game of two halves. A strong wind and accompanying rain blew downfield at the Fortress Stadium with Stortford having the advantage in the first 45 minutes but having to face the elements in the second period.

There was only one change in Rod Stringer's starting line-up. On loan from the Lilywhites, Adam Bailey-Dennis, was away in Germany and unavailable and the returning Joe Tabiri, who was the skipper, filled in alongside Phil Anderson in the centre of defence. Only Johnny Herd and Ashley Miller remained from the Stortford side that had played in last season's corresponding fixture. Reece Prestedge and Callum McNaughton had also been in that squad but were in the opposition ranks this time around. Rod Stringer's new signing, James Walker, was on the substitutes' bench.

Against second in the table Ravens the Blues were soon mounting early attacks. In the 8th minute Johnny Herd crossed from the left and Mikel Suarez headed wide from 15 yards but four minutes later the Blues went one up. Again there was a centre from the left side, this time by Sheldon Sellears, after the attack initially started with Donovan Simmonds and Herd and when the cross arced over to the far post **RYAN AUGER** timed his run to perfection to drill the ball low into the far bottom corner (0-1).

In the 21st minute Stortford forced two successive corners and from the last of these Reece Prestedge's attempted clearance swirled back in the wind and fell out of the sky for an unmarked Sheldon Sellears, a few yards from goal, who almost only had to get a touch to score but unfortunately the midfielder missed contact with the ball. However, he made up for it in the 24th minute when he netted second goal. A long clearance downfield by David Gregory, aided by the wind, founded **SHELDON SELLEARS** on the left side approaching the penalty area and after cutting inside defender Ugo Udoji he fired a great effort from the angle of the box that finished in the net inside the far post (0-2).

Jack Holland headed wide for Bromley on the half hour following a Joe Anderson cross but the Blues came back and when Johnny Herds' free-kick was headed on by Mikel Suarez the ball was almost diverted past keeper Seb Brown by Donovan Simmonds. Then in the 37th minute Frankie Merrifield was narrowly wide from 20 yards after the ball came out to him from the Bromley defence.

An attempt at goal from the edge of the box by the hosts' Moses Ademola was over the bar but the Blues were close to extending their lead in the last action before the break. Sheldon Sellears picked up a loose ball inside his own half and attacking the Ravens' defence he slammed a 20 yard drive that the diving Brown held.

Half time: 0-2

In the first thirty seconds after the restart there were early signs of the pressure Stortford were going to be under after the interval when a shot from Damian Scannell was diverted away from goal by David Gregory's legs. Then soon afterwards Moses Ademola laid the ball back to Reece Prestedge and the former Blue's 25 yard low effort saw a fine save by Gregory turning the ball away at the expense of a corner.

Unfortunately, the result of the flag kick in the 49th minute was Bromley's first goal of the night. Louis Dennis' corner on the left reached the far post where a downward header from skipper **ROB SWAINE** beat Gregory (1-2).

In the midway point of the half Stortford remained under pressure with Ademola going close and the Blues' raids upfield were sporadic although they did win a few corners. A good through ball from Sheldon Sellears almost found Ryan Auger in the 66th minute but stopper Seb Brown just managed to hold the ball a split second in time.

In the 74th minute Ademola headed inches over the top from a Joe Anderson cross and a minute later the scores were level. Cheye Alexander fouled substitute Jordan Robertson on the left and **DANNY WALDREN** whipped in a free-kick from fully 35 yards, that evaded defenders and attackers alike and nestled in the net at the far upright (2-2).

Rod Stringer brought James Walker into the action in the 78th minute replacing Donovan Simmonds.

With time running down the home side pushed forward to try to net the winner. With five minutes of normal time remaining Jamie Slabber just failed to make contact at the far post with a cross from Jordan Robertson

on the left that travelled through the six yard box and Robertson then headed over the bar from close range.

The closest that Stortford came to grabbing a winning goal in the later stages was a Ryan Auger free-kick from outside the box that Brown held reasonably comfortably. They also had one strong penalty shout.

Any attempts by the Blues to run the clock down were hampered by the fact that when they had chances to bring the ball away from defence they continually lost possession. They were made to pay when the heart-breaking winner for the home side came in the first of four added minutes at the match's conclusion. Jamie Slabber's cross into the box from the right saw Cheye Alexander, under pressure from Ademola, fail to get enough power on his clearance and the ball fell kindly for substitute **ADAM BIRCHALL** to blast a shot from the edge of the area wide of Gregory's dive to his right and into the corner of the net (3-2).

Referee Lee Venamore cautioned Mikel Suarez, Cheye Alexander and Phil Anderson along with the Ravens' Rob Swaine and Callum McNaughton.

Full time: 3-2

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: David Gregory; Cheye Alexander; Johnny Herd; Frankie Merrifield; Joe Tabiri; Phil Anderson; Sheldon Sellears; Spencer McCall; Mikel Suarez; Donovan Simmonds (sub – James Walker 78 mins); Ryan Auger.

Unused substitutes: George Sykes, Ryan Melaugh, Rod Young and Ashley Miller.

BROMLEY: Seb Brown; Ugo Udoji; Joe Anderson; Reece Prestedge; Rob Swaine (sub – Callum McNaughton 65 mins); Jack Holland; Damian Scannell (sub – Adam Birchall 70 mins); Danny Waldren; Jamie Slabber; Moses Ademola; Louis Dennis (sub – Jordan Robertson 70 mins).

Unused substitutes: Paul Rodgers and Pierre Joseph-Dubois.

Attendance: 292