

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3 CONCORD RANGERS 1**  
**(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

The formbook was thrown upside down at the ProKit UK Stadium as the Blues beat the Beachboys to record their first Vanarama Conference South victory since the 11<sup>th</sup> October whilst the visitors had come into this encounter on the back of only two defeats in their previous 15 fixtures.

Rod Stringer's side were undoubtedly boosted by the return from injury of Anthony Church and Ashley Miller. Also, the inclusion of new signing Rickie Hayles from Lowestoft Town in the central defence also made a difference to the confidence of the back-line. Cheye Alexander, Phil Anderson, Spencer McCall and Ryan Auger all took a seat on the bench and Joe Tabiri retained the captain's armband.

Both teams made lively starts. In the 4<sup>th</sup> minute Sam Collins' free-kick from the right was headed against the far upright by Lewis Taaffe. Then immediately when Stortford, attacking the Airport end, won a free-kick themselves Sheldon Sellears' ball into the box was sent goalwards by Donovan Simmonds and Rangers' stopper Josh Vickers scooped the ball away off the line at the last second.

Sellears was prominent early on and when Joe Tabiri slipped the ball to the speedy midfielder in the 16<sup>th</sup> minute he motored down the middle only to be thwarted by Vickers who came off his line to block well.

Former Blue Steve Cawley should have put the Essex side ahead in the 19<sup>th</sup> minute. He was set up with a chance in front of goal by Lewis Taaffe and Sam Collins but with the goal at his mercy he shot well wide. This was to have consequences for Concord as Stortford went ahead within a minute of this escape. Anthony Church was fouled close to the touch-line on the left and the free-kick by **SHELDON SELLEARS** from fully 35 yards deceived Vickers who, distracted by Donovan Simmonds running across his line of vision, saw the ball evade him and enter the net (1-0).

The Blues' lead was doubled eight minutes later following a Sellears corner on the right. The ball grazed the top of Mikel Suarez's head and reached Adam Bailey-Dennis on the far of the box and when the central defender lifted it back over towards the far post Donovan Simmonds' shot was turned into the net from a couple of yards range by **ANTHONY CHURCH**. There were appeals from Rangers' players that Church was offside but the goal was allowed to stand by Referee Christopher O'Donnell (2-0).

In a half that got progressively more niggly, both teams' attacks threatened more goals but the closest was two minutes from the break with new man Rickie Hayles narrowly wide with a far post header after a Sellears corner on the left.

Half time: 2-0

After early pressure from the Beachboys on the restart, the second half settled into end to end exchanges although the visitors had the edge in terms of possession.

In the 58<sup>th</sup> minute Rod Stringer brought on James Walker to replace Mikel Suarez who left the pitch due to a groin strain.

A long range effort from Concord midfielder Alex Woodyard flashed close past David Gregory's goal in the 68<sup>th</sup> minute and then when Danny Glozier crossed from the left substitute Tony Stokes went close.

The welcome win for the Blues was confirmed six minutes from the end of normal time. Johnny Herd and Donovan Simmonds were engaged in an attack up the left flank and when Simmonds pulled the ball back towards the near post **JAMES WALKER** scored his first Stortford goal turning to fire home from eight yards (3-0).

The visitors continued to push forward in the closing minutes and Steve King and Tony Stokes, with an angled low attempt that Gregory dived to save, nearly reduced the deficit. And the Blues hopes of keeping a clean sheet were denied in the first of seven added minutes when the Beachboys notched a consolation goal. Following a raid up the right the ball arrived in the middle and despite Gregory making a couple of excellent saves **TONY STOKES** eventually scrambled the ball over the line (3-1).

Referee O'Donnell showed yellow cards late in the game to the Blues' Ashley Miller and Frankie Merrifield and Concord's Mitchell Pinnock.

Full time: 3-1

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD:** David Gregory; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; Adam Bailey-Dennis; Rickie Hayles; Sheldon Sellears (sub – Spencer McCall 86 mins) ; Anthony Church (sub – Ryan Auger 85 mins); Mikel Suarez (sub – James Walker 58 mins); Donovan Simmonds; Frankie Merrifield.

Unused substitutes: Cheye Alexander and Phil Anderson

**CONCORD RANGERS:** Josh Vickers; Jeremy Walker (sub – Taylor Miles 46 mins); Danny Glozier; Alex Woodyard; Steve King; Matt Fry;

Gary Ogilvie (sub – Mitchell Pinnock 46 mins); James White; Lewis Taaffe; Sam Collins; Steve Cawley (sub – Tony Stokes 61 mins).  
Unused substitutes: Jack Lampe and Joe Gardner.

Attendance: 325