

Saturday 17th January 2015

MAIDENHEAD UNITED 1 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

Two goals in the space of four minutes midway through the second half was instrumental in the Blues extracting maximum points from this match at York Road. There was no doubt that Stortford were fully deserving of the victory giving an efficient performance for virtually the whole ninety minutes. Going ahead before the break through a Frankie Merrifield goal the only time they looked under threat was directly after the restart when the Magpies levelled. However, Sheldon Sellears and substitute Mikel Suarez netted in the 65th and 69th minutes respectively to make it a fairly comfortable final twenty minutes or so to the final whistle.

This win was the Blues first on the road in Vanarama Conference South since 11th October when they won at Farnborough. Since then they had drawn one and lost four on their travels.

Rod Stringer's squad included Mikel Suarez, returning from injury, and Ben Marlow, a midfielder, the new loan signing from West Ham United. Both were to come on in the second half. Ryan Auger was absent due to illness. The hosts included former Blues Danny Green and De'Reece Vanderhyde. United also included seasoned ex Premier League and Football League striker D J Campbell. The former Birmingham, Blackpool, Queens Park Rangers and Blackburn Rovers forward was largely ineffectual and was replaced after the hour mark.

Stortford had the benefit of the York Road slope in their favour in the first half and made a bright start. Sheldon Sellears was very prominent in the early Stortford attacks. In the 5th minute his low teasing cross into the six yard box was cleared away near the goal-line by Magpies' skipper Mark Nisbet and then shortly afterwards another cross from the right by him was flicked over the bar by Frankie Merrifield from close range.

The early pressure continued with a Merrifield header off target and in the 10th minute a corner from Sellears on the right was headed goalwards by Rickie Hayles but keeper Elvijs Putnins held the ball under the bar.

The Blues went in front in the 22nd minute. Joe Tabari, retaining the ball well, burst into the left side of the Maidenhead box and a combination of his determination and slack defending by the Magpies enabled him to lay a short low pass into the six yard box where **FRANKIE MERRIFIELD** flicked into the net (0-1).

Danny Green was wide with a first time 15 yard effort from the left hand side of the area in the 28th minute and then nine minutes later a Harry Pritchard cross from the left produced a diving header at the far post by Dave Tarpey that was narrowly wide.

Stortford looked threatening despite Maidenhead coming more into the picture before the break and two minutes before the interval Putnins was forced to beat away a fierce shot from Jay Davies that was struck from the edge of the area.

Half time: 0-1

It came as no great surprise that the hosts surged forward on the restart. After a couple of useful attacks they then equalised in the 50th minute. Danny Green gained possession on the right and taking the ball forward he found De'Reece Vanderhyde whose cross towards the far post was met by **DAVE TARPEY** and the hosts' leading scorer gave Dillon Phillips no chance with a shot high into the net (1-1).

The Blues retaliated two minutes later with an attack that saw Sheldon Sellaars cross into the six yard box with Donovan Simmonds just failing to connect with the ball.

The Magpies had the slight edge in the period of play up to the hour and Adam Bailey-Dennis collected a yellow card when fouling D J Campbell who would have been on a run for goal had the central defender not interrupted his progress. Soon afterwards following a Maidenhead corner Sellaars burst away from defence and went on a great run before teeing up Donovan Simmonds for a shot from just inside the box but unfortunately the striker's drive flashed wide of Putnins' right hand upright.

Rod Stringer brought Mikel Suarez on for Jay Davies and soon afterwards the Blues regained the lead. Adam Bailey-Dennis, in his own half, delivered an accurate pass out to **SHELDON SELLEARS** on the left touchline and after a typical run then cut inside to the edge of the angle of the box to smash a low drive inside the near post (1-2).

Stortford then had a two goal cushion four minutes later after another attack on the left. Joe Tabiri battled to win the ball from an opponent and slipped it out to Johnny Herd who delivered a perfect cross into the area where **MIKEL SUAREZ**'s downward header from 12 yards bounced wide of Putnins' despairing dive to his right and the ball nestled in the corner of the net (1-3).

The Magpies pressed immediately following Blues' third goal but Dillon Phillips was in confident form and he saved full length to keep out a low angled effort from Eddie Hutchinson and then foiled Danny Green with a block at his post after Green had cut in from the right following a pass from Dave Tarpey across the box.

There was an escape for Stortford in the 77th minute as United substitute Stefan Brown inadvertently diverted a goal-bound shot from one of his own players wide of the target. However, although Phillips had to grab the ball at Green's feet late on the Blues saw out play to the final whistle with few if any other worries.

Apart from Adam Bailey-Dennis' booking, Referee Tim Wood also cautioned Mikel Suarez for kicking the ball away. The Match Official also showed yellow cards to the home side's Adrian Clifton, Dave Tarpey and Ryan Upward.

Full time: 1-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Dillon Phillips; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Joe Tabiri; Adam Bailey-Dennis; Rickie Hayles; Sheldon Sellaars (sub – George Allen 79 mins); Anthony Church; Donovan Simmonds (sub – Ben Marlow 72 mins); Frankie Merrifield; Jay Davies (sub – Mikel Suarez 64 mins).

Unused substitutes: James Walker and Spencer McCall.

MAIDENHEAD UNITED: Elvijs Putnins; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Harry Pritchard; Ryan Upward; Mark Nisbet; Simon Downer (sub – Jacob Erskine 56 mins); Danny Green; Adrian Clifton; D J Campbell (sub - Reece Tison-Lascaris 64 mins)); Eddie Hutchinson (sub – Stefan Brown 72 mins); Dave Tarpey.

Unused substitutes: Leon Solomon and Sam Gray.

Attendance: 330