

Tuesday 17th March 2015

**BATH CITY 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

Stortford played out the last 28 minutes of this contest at Twerton Park with ten men but still managed to record another excellent Vanarama Conference South victory on the road – their third successive away win and seventh in all this term. Central defender Adam Bailey-Dennis was sent off in the 62nd minute after receiving his second yellow card of the evening and this just eleven minutes after he had notched what proved to be the winning goal for the Blues.

In the end despite being a man short Stortford had few problems holding on to their lead with the back line defending superbly leaving keeper James Bransgrove little to do. The result meant that the Blues had collected fourteen points from their last seven matches.

Rod Stringer made a couple of changes to the side that had shared the points with Sutton United three days earlier as he brought back George Allen to the starting line-up as well as Mikel Suarez with Greg Pearson and Frankie Merrifield dropping to the bench. Spencer McCall, a returning Josh Fagbohun and under 21 player Connor Peters were also potential substitutes but in the event weren't called upon.

The first half was largely uneventful and mostly a midfield battle with neither side able to gain a strong foothold on proceedings. In the 11th minute the Romans' Phil Walsh sent a through ball down the middle for the tall Nick McCootie to chase and collect but James Bransgrove did well to close down the striker and force him to run along the edge of the area and eventually the danger passed. A minute later at the other end skipper Joe Tabiri, who was to have a very good match, set up Ashley Miller to cut in towards goal from the right but City stopper Jason Mellor came out to block at Miller's feet.

In the 17th minute a menacing attack by the hosts saw McCootie and Chas Hemmings link and when the latter crossed inside Andy Watkins fired wide of Bransgrove's left upright from 15 yards.

Adam Bailey-Dennis was shown his first yellow card of the night for a challenge on Ben Adelsbury in the 25th minute. Then shortly afterwards a free-kick from just outside the box taken by Chris Allen was deflected off the defensive wall for a corner.

Bobby-Joe Taylor was lively particularly before the break whilst Mikel Suarez worried the hosts' player with his aerial strength nodding the ball into spaces but the Blues made few openings.

A minute from the break Bobby-Joe Taylor's speed almost took him clear to threaten Jason Mellor's goal but Bath skipper Andy Gallinagh managed to shepherd the ball back to his keeper.

Half time: 0-0

City had a half chance to take the lead within a minute of the restart as Nick McCootie slipped the ball for Andy Watkins to advance into the box but the forward overran the ball and James Bransgrove dropped to hold on to it. Then Dan Ball tried a long distance attempt that Bransgrove held comfortably.

The Blues winning goal came in the 51st minute. There didn't seem a great deal of danger to the hosts as they had plenty of players back when Stortford built up an attack. But when Ben Marlow fed the ball out to Sheldon Sellears on the right wing the Blues' leading goalscorer sent a waist high cross into the box which evaded keeper Mellor. The ball fell to **ADAM BAILEY-DENNIS** who was beyond the far post and the defender calmly despatched a cushioned side-foot volley into the far corner of the net (0-1).

Bobby-Joe Taylor, in space at the angle of the box, delivered a fierce shot high and wide in the 57th minute and at the other end on the hour Nick McCootie's effort with a shot on the turn from the edge of the area was held by James Bransgrove.

In the 62nd minute the Blues' goalscorer made a tackle from behind on Andy Watkins and Referee Steven Plane raised the second yellow card at the Blues' player on loan from Bromley. City almost immediately made a double substitution with one of the replacements, Ross Stearn, causing Stortford the most worries in the time up to the final whistle.

Almost as soon as he had come on Stearn whipped in a cross from the right that Ben Adelsbury headed narrowly wide of the far upright and then when he took a free-kick outside the box the ball deflected off the defensive wall and finished on the roof of the net. Stearn also struck a shot from distance that was only inches over the bar.

Stortford's defence with dealing well with the pressure from the home side and in a rare foray upfield, in the 80th minute, substitute Greg Pearson almost connected in the box with a long free-kick from James Brangrove.

Invariably held up at the edge of the area by Stortford's defence City's threat petered out with them failing to impose any problems in the remaining time which included an added five minutes.

Apart from the two yellows shown to Adam Bailey-Dennis no other Stortford player saw a card but there were second half cautions for the hosts' Nick McCootie and Pat Keary.

Full time: 0-1

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: James Bransgrove; Ashley Miller; Kenzer Lee; Rickie Hayles; Adam Bailey-Dennis; George Allen; Sheldon Sellears (sub – Frankie Merrifield 89 mins); Joe Tabiri; Mikel Suarez (sub – Greg Pearson 55 mins); Ben Marlow; Bobby-Joe Taylor.
Unused substitutes: Spencer McCall, Josh Fagbohun and Connor Peters.

BATH CITY: Jason Mellor; Andy Gallinagh (sub – Dan Bowman 68 mins); Dan Ball; Pat Keary; Phil Walsh; Ben Adelsbury; Nabi Diallo; Chris Allen (sub – Frankie Artus 81 mins); Andy Watkins; Nick McCootie; Chas Hemmings (sub – Ross Stearn 68 mins).
Unused substitutes: Ashley Kington and Jim Rollo.

Attendance: 303