

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3, WESTON-SUPER-MARE 4  
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)**

Whilst the visitors' relegation fears were eased by this result the same couldn't be said for Rod Stringer's side who after the promise of the last couple of matches need to kick-start some positive form and results at the ProKit UK Stadium as quickly as possible.



The Blues had made a bright start and gone in front before a crazy period either side of the break saw them concede four goals in a 17 minute spell

with the Seagulls' Jamie Lucas striking a hat-trick. Stortford fought back in a late rally to score twice but they couldn't quite snatch an equaliser before the final whistle.

The Blues boss' hopes of naming an unchanged side following the win at Basingstoke a week earlier were dashed when skipper Anthony Church was unable to shrug off a slight hamstring problem in the pre-match warm-up. This enabled former Norwich City youth team player Henry Randall to come into the starting line-up for his debut. Included amongst the substitutes was Mikel Suarez.



There was plenty of energy in Stortford's early play and attacking the Airport end they pushed the Seagulls back on the defensive. In the second minute a fine pass from Sheldon Sellears found Bobby-Joe Taylor cutting in from the left only to see keeper Luke Purnell parry the ball away at his near post. Then a corner on the left from Sellears resulted in a shot from Henry Randall that was fumbled by Purnell but then held.

Weston gradually settled and Jake Larkins was called into action twice in the matter of a few seconds in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute. A shot from Jamie Lucas from the edge of the box was turned aside well by the Stortford stopper and then when the ball ran loose Larkins again did well to divert the follow up shot from Dayle Grubb for a corner.

At the other end a minute later Sellears almost gave the Blues the lead following an incisive attack on the right flank by Randall and Taylor which ended with the Blues' midfielder driving a low angled effort goalwards only to see defender Ollie Barnes clear the ball off his line.

The Somerset side lost their skipper and central defender Tom Jordan in the 17<sup>th</sup> minute when he hobbled off with an ankle injury and had to be substituted. Things looked promising for Stortford as they took up the initiative. Sheldon Sellears drove a shot into the side-netting from the right in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute and then a shot by Bobby-Joe Taylor from the other side was beaten away at the near upright by Purnell. The Blues finally took the lead in the 28<sup>th</sup> minute. A Sellears' corner from the left was met by a firm header by **ADAM BAILEY-DENNIS** coming in from the far post and directing the ball under the bar for his first Blues goal of the campaign (1-0).



The visitors retaliated just past the half hour as speedy winger Joe McClennan set up Dayle Grubb for a shot on target but Jake Larkins' outstretched boot kept the ball away from goal.

Stortford weren't to be so fortunate in the 37<sup>th</sup> minute however. An effort on goal from Dayle Grubb from the left side of the box took a kind deflection into the path of **JAMIE LUCAS** in acres of space and the striker duly placed his shot low and wide of Larkins (1-1).

It took only a further two minutes for Weston to take the lead. An attack down the middle saw Oliver Watkins play a through ball to an unmarked **LUCAS** who from just inside the box fired another low shot past Larkins(1-2).

Five minutes before interval Bobby-Joe Taylor headed over from a Sheldon Sellears cross but the visitors were close to extending their lead shortly afterwards as a substitute Jacob Cane was set up for a shot that

Jake Larkins saved and the shot from the rebound was cleared off the line by Ashley Miller.

Half time: 1-2

Stortford paid for a slow restart after the interval and within ten minutes were trailing by three goals. **JAMIE LUCAS** completed his hat-trick in the 47<sup>th</sup> minute taking advantage a Blues' failure on a number of occasions to clear the ball away from in and around the box and volleying past Larkins (1-3).

Then the Stortford keeper diving full length made a fine save tipping away a 35 yard free-kick from Kane Ingram but he could do little about the Seagulls' fourth goal in the 54<sup>th</sup> minute. Dayle Grubb and Jake Llewellyn linked on the left with **OLIVER WATKINS** who took the ball inside before delivering a great shot that rebounded into the net off the inside of the far post (1-4).

Weston keeper Luke Purnell had to be on his toes to at his near post keep out an inswinging Sellears' free-kick but for the most part the visitors were allowed too much space by Stortford. However, Rod Stringer had brought Mikel Suarez off the substitutes' bench on the hour and with fifteen minutes of normal time remaining the lead was cut. After being fouled himself a quickly taken free-kick taken by Sheldon Sellears released **ASHLEY MILLER** into the right side of the box and he advanced to shoot under the advancing Purnell (2-4).



Jake Larkins had to save with his legs from substitute Jake Mawford's angled drive a minute later and then in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute the lead was down to one. A free-kick into the area resulted in the ball shuttling around the

front edge of the box until it fell for **MIKEL SUAREZ** to lash home a left footer into the corner of the net from 16 yards (3-4).

The thrills didn't stop then. With five minutes left Larkins made another smart save to keep out a Dayle Grubb free-kick and Weston's Purnell held a header from Ashley Miller and quickly followed that with a save diving to his left to hold a 20 yard effort from Bobby-Joe Taylor.

The action continued into the five minutes of added time as the Blues pushed hard for an equaliser. First Watkins missed a chance to make the game safe for Weston with a shot wide of the post when clear and then at the other end when Bobby-Joe Taylor crossed the ball into the box Rickie Hayles shot from towards the far post was cleared near the line by substitute Aaron Brown. Stortford's luck was out and Lucas almost netted a fourth for himself just before the final whistle as he overran the ball to Larkins when clear on goal.

Referee Constantine Hatzidakis brandished seven yellow cards during the contest – five to Stortford – George Allen, Frankie Merrifield, Kenzer Lee, Adam Bailey-Dennis and Rickie Hayles – and two to Weston – Kane Ingram and Jake Mawford.

Full time: 3-4

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD:** Jake Larkins; Ashley Miller; Rickie Hayles; Joe Tabiri; Adam Bailey-Dennis; George Allen; Sheldon Sellears; Henry Randall (sub – Kenzer Lee 49 mins); Greg Pearson; Frankie Merrifield (sub – Mikel Suarez 60 mins); Bobby-Joe Taylor.

Unused substitutes: Nick Salapatas, James Walker and Matt Gill.

**WESTON SUPER MARE:** Luke Purnell; Ollie Barnes (sub – Aaron Brown 82 mins); Jake Llewellyn; Jamie Edge; Tom Jordan (sub – Jacob Cane 17 mins); Clayton Fortune; Joe McClennan (sub – Jake Mawford 66 mins); Kane Ingram; Jamie Lucas; Dayle Grubb; Oliver Watkins.

Unused substitute: Bradley Ash.

Attendance: 315