

Saturday 11th April 2015

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3
(VANARAMA CONFERENCE SOUTH)

Two goals from Anthony Edgar and a third netted by Bobby-Joe Taylor all in the closing stages of this contest enabled a revitalised Blues to plunder maximum points at Vauxhall Road. Since beating Wealdstone in early March Stortford have now taken 17 points from their last nine games and this victory meant that they extinguished any chances that the Tudors had of getting into the play-off places.

Apart from the start of both halves the action was very even and until those final minutes the match had all the hallmarks of finishing a goalless stalemate. The Blues did the hard work in the first half by defending well on a bobbly pitch when kicking up the hill and facing a gusty wind. The two centre backs, Rickie Hayles and Kenzer Lee, played well throughout whilst skipper Anthony Church and Joe Tabiri dug deep in midfield. In fact all the team worked hard to put the disappointment of Chelmsford earlier in the week behind them.

Joe Tabiri and Sheldon Sellears were both included in Rod Stringer's starting eleven with Ben Marlow and James Walker on the substitutes bench.

The hosts started brightly and pressed strongly at the start. Hemel skipper Jordan Parkes was narrowly wide with a shot in the 2nd minute whilst striker Oliver Hawkins headed over from close range when presented with a good chance following Kyle Connolly's cross from the left five minutes later. Then shortly afterwards James Bransgrove deflected a Parkes corner away from danger.

Stortford's first penetrative attack came in the 12th minute. Following good inter-passing on the right between Anthony Church, Frankie Merrifield and Joe Tabiri the latter crossed from the touch-line and the ball struck the top of the crossbar to drop down to the left where Merrifield shot wide from a very acute angle.

At the other end another corner from Parkes in the 20th minute resulted in Ed Oshodi's close range shot being blocked by Bransgrove and then midway through the half the Tudors' Dennis Oli nodded in a free-kick from Parkes but the goal was over-ruled when an Assistant Referee's flag was raised to indicate offside.

From then on until the latter stages of the first period the pattern of play was very even with most of the action confined between the two penalty areas.

In the last few minutes up to the break Stortford had the slight edge on proceedings and in the 43rd minute when the Blues won a free-kick just outside the box Hemel stopper Laurie Walker pulled off a fine save diving full length to keep out Bobby-Joe Taylor's goal bound effort.

Half time: 0-0

The hosts had the better of the early stages of the restart and James Bransgrove made an outstanding save from James Potton in the 54th minute when the substitute's header from a Parkes' corner looked to be going in at the far post. Then a few minutes later Potton broke down the middle but his shot from the edge of the box was wide of Bransgrove's left hand post.

Stortford came more into the picture as Rickie Hayles headed over a Sheldon Sellears cross and Anthony Edgar shot over the target from an acute angle. Also Greg Pearson lifted the ball over following a Hayles' long throw towards the six yard box.

The last time that the hosts threatened was in the 77th minute when Jordan Parkes struck a drive from outside the area and James Bransgrove diving low to his right held on to the ball at the second attempt.

Then the match was turned on its head to leave the home crowd stunned. In the 83rd minute Bobby-Joe Taylor worked the ball up the left touch-line with Anthony Edgar and when Taylor played it inside to **EDGAR** the former West Ham United player took a few paces before sending a perfect right footed 25 yard shot arrowing into the far top right hand corner with keeper Walker left standing (0-1).

Two minutes later with the home side looking for an equaliser the Blues broke swiftly down the middle with Edgar and Greg Pearson exchanging passes Pearson sent **ANTHONY EDGAR** through to finish low past Walker and complete a double strike (0-2).

Frankie Merrifield was close to adding to the total with an attempt from the edge of the box before Stortford netted a third in the second of four minutes of added time. Hemel players had their heads on their chests as Bobby-Joe Taylor and Anthony Edgar linked again on the left and when the ball arrived in towards the near post substitute James Walker had an effort blocked before **BOBBY-JOE TAYLOR** fired in from ten yards (0-3).

Referee Robert Hyde cautioned the hosts' Zane Banton and Kyle Connolly in the first half. There were no bookings for the Blues.

Full time: 0-3

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: James Bransgrove; Ashley Miller; Bobby-Joe Taylor; Joe Tabiri; Kenzer Lee; Rickie Hayles; Sheldon Sellears (sub – James Walker 59 mins); Anthony Church; Greg Pearson; Frankie Merrifield; Anthony Edgar.

Unused substitutes: Ben Marlow, Connor Peters, Marcel Barrington and Jake Larkins.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN: Laurie Walker; Ed Asafu-Adjaye; Kyle Connolly (sub – James Simmonds 76 mins); Jordan Parkes; Dominic Hyam; Eddie Oshodi; Dennis Oli; Matty Harriott; Oliver Hawkins (sub – James Potton 46 mins); Zane Banton (sub – Luke Allen 66 mins); Jorell Johnson.

Unused substitutes: Arthur Lee and Jamie Head.

Attendance: 554