

MAIDENHEAD UNITED 4. BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1 (VANARAMA NATIONAL SOUTH)

The optimism following Saturday's opening fixture disappeared at York Road where the Blues were on the receiving end of a heavy defeat. Although there were a couple of periods of play during which it was possible to think Blues might extract something from the contest, an early penalty followed by an error by Tom Lovelock deep into first half stoppage time gave Stortford a lot of work to do on the restart. Although Elliott Buchanan pulled a goal back the strong direct style of the hosts produced two further goals before the end.

Rod Stringer made one change to the side that had beaten Havant & Waterlooville three days earlier with Christian Smith replacing Sheldon Sellears in the starting line-up. When Smith came off at the break with a groin strain it was Sellears who replaced him.

After an even start United went ahead from the spot in the eighth minute with referee Anthony Serrano deeming that Mikel Suarez's aerial challenge on Josh Huggins just inside the front edge of the box was too strong. Ben Wright duly found the bottom corner from the penalty.

Maidenhead, who had former Blues keeper Carl Pentney between the sticks, had the slope in their favour and had a spell where they had most of the possession. In the 12th minute Tom Lovelock made a low save to stop an angled shot from Dave Tarpey and then midway through the half a direct swift move up the right flank saw Huggins cross into the middle and striker Jake Reid fire over from eight yards.

Huggins was narrowly wide just past the half hour but leading up to the break Stortford began to threaten Pentney's goal. In the 38th minute a far post header from Suarez following a Buchanan cross was held under the bar by the home keeper. Then six minutes later receiving a pass from Christian Smith, Buchanan tried a shot on the turn that Pentney held on the goal-line.

Deep into stoppage time the Blues were dealt a hammer blow. A long kick down-field was headed back towards goal by Johnny Herd but Tom Lovelock failed to catch the ball and Jake Reid nipped in to easily net. Early after the restart Pentney did well to hold on to an awkward low centre from De'Reece Vanderhyde whilst at the other end the Magpies' skipper Alan Massey was close with a glancing header from a Huggins' corner. Pentney held on to a low deflected angled effort from substitute Sheldon Sellears in the 51st minute and then Stortford were back in the match three minutes later. Matty Fanimmo was fouled 25 yards from goal and although Elliott Buchanan's fierce free-kick struck the defensive wall the striker quickly latched on to the rebound and volleyed past Pentney into the corner of the net.

Soon afterwards home defender Massey found his name in the Referee's book – the only yellow card of the evening – after he had sythed down Fanimmo.

There was hope at this time that Stortford might travel home with maybe a share of the spoils. However, United's attacks continued to trouble Stortford and Ben Wright headed against the far upright from Tarpey's deep cross in the 58th minute. It was Wright who restored the two goal lead for the hosts ten minutes later. A quick break up-field saw Huggins feed James Mulley to advance on goal and although Lovelock produced a strong blocking save the ball ran loose to the right side of the box and Wright drilled it into the far corner from 15 yards.

There was almost further damage a couple of minutes later as Wright lifted a Reid cross over the bar from close range. There was a brief rally from the Blues with a long throw by Vanderhyde being headed towards the six yard box by Suarez but Anthony Church just failed to turn the ball over the goal-line and then when Sellears crossed deep from the right Suarez was inches wide with a fine header.

There was no question of where the points were going to after Maidenhead's fourth goal eight minutes from time. George Allen fouled substitute Gavin James fully thirty yards out and fellow substitute Sam Barratt found the top corner with an excellent free-kick.

TEAM INFO AND MATCH DETAILS:

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Johnny Herd; Christian Smith (Sheldon Sellears 46); Kenzer Lee; George Allen; Frankie Merrifield (Josh Ekim 66); Anthony Church; Mikel Suarez; Elliott Buchanan; Matty Fanimio (Michael Thalassitis 63).
Unused substitutes: Adam Bailey-Dennis and Ejiro Okosieme

MAIDENHEAD UNITED: Carl Pentney; Ryan Peters; Harry Pritchard; Ryan Upward; Alan Massey; Dean Inman; Dave Tarpey (Sam Barratt 66); James Mulley; Jake Reid; Ben Wright (Gavin James 79); Josh Huggins (Mark Nisbet 74).
Unused substitutes: Andy Jenkinson and Callum Ferguson.

Attendance: 354