

Wednesday 9th September 2015

ILFORD 1, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0
(FA YOUTH CUP – PRELIMINARY ROUND)

Tim Moylette's side lost this FA Youth Cup preliminary round tie in controversial circumstances.

A goal down after 20 minutes an equalising goal should have been allowed to stand minutes before the break. Ilford keeper Lewis Catlin failed to catch a high cross into the box and Stortford striker George Bartlam shot goalwards with the ball appearing to cross the line before Foxes' defender Ryan Mugerá cleared it away. While a number of Stortford players were celebrating referee Kevin Nicholson was unsure and allowed his judgement to be swayed by an assistant referee who indicated no goal and play continued. It was an unfortunate decision although up until that point in the match the visitors had been clearly second best.

Playing their first competitive match of the season Stortford made a slow start and Ilford made all the early running. The first chance for Stortford came in the 15th minute when a long ball into the box from the left by Alex Rogers was struck first time by Bartlam from 15 yards but it was straight at the hosts' stopper. What proved to be the deciding goal arrived five minutes later after they conceded a free-kick out near the left touch-line. Peter Balman hit the ball fully 40 yards and it sailed over Thomas Beckett in the Blues goal and under the bar at the near post.

Stortford's forays upfield were few and far between but in the 29th minute a long ball into the box from Danny Palmer saw a flicked header from Aaron Thomas that was held by Catlin. However, the hosts recovered the initiative and Beckett had to make good stops from Edas Valionis, Morgan Seaman and Joe Belcher to prevent Ilford from extending their lead. Then came the drama of the goal not given.

Half time: 1-0

After the restart the Blues played with more fluency and started to pose more of a threat. Substitute Ross Gill was close to scoring shortly after coming on just after the hour mark when he just failed to make contact at the far post with a Jordan Brown free-kick and the home defence was stretched at times. However, Ilford should have doubled their advantage after 72 minutes with the Stortford defence getting itself in a muddle and allowing substitute Torian Hamilton-Jones to run at goal but fortunately his shot was over the bar.

Stortford pressed hard in the final minutes to try to take the match to extra time and they forced a number of corners. One of the corners from Callum O'Brien resulted in skipper Bryn Thorpe's header being saved by Catlin and a little later following Thorpe's deep free-kick into the box the

home keeper managed to scramble away an attempt at goal from Aaron Thomas.

Full time: 1-0

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Thomas Beckett; Callum O'Brien; Jordan Brown; Danny Palmer (Ross Gill 61); Alex Askri; Bryn Thorpe; Alex Rogers; Jack Thomas; George Bartlam; Aaron Thomas; Lewis McDonald (Joe Senior 77).

Unused substitutes: Mitchell Hodgson, Ted Dean and Callum Lynskey