

LEVERSTOCK GREEN 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 4  
(HERTS SENIOR CUP – 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND)

Elliott Buchanan was back to his early season goal scoring form as he netted all four goals to beat the Spartan South Midland League side at Pancake Lane. His two headed goals before the break and two in the second half sent Stortford comfortably through to the next round where they will visit Green's near neighbours Hemel Hempstead Town in early December.

After the gloom of the weekend the Blues had few problems winning this tie and had a large percentage of possession in the ninety minutes. The hosts showed a lot of endeavour but little guile and never mounted much pressure on Stortford's defence and keeper Tom Lovelock had a relatively quiet evening.

The side, skippered by Johnny Herd, included Josh Ekim, David Hutton and Christian Smith in the starting line-up but the squad of sixteen was the same as that which had travelled to Oxford City a few days earlier. Leverstock striker Louis Bircham cleared the bar with a shot from distance early on but Stortford went ahead soon afterwards in the 8<sup>th</sup> minute. Herd slung over a deep cross into the area that was headed into the net from eight yards by Buchanan.

Christian Smith was close with a 35 yard free-kick whilst Green's Chinua Phinn-Archer almost wriggled through the Stortford defence before Tom Lovelock grabbed the ball. Midway through the half Kieran Bywater was narrowly wide with a drive after he was set up for the shot following a move on the right involving De'Reece Vanderhyde and David Hutton. In the 25<sup>th</sup> minute a header by the host's centre back James Budden was held under the bar by Lovelock.

Kieran Bywater was just off target with two efforts from outside the box before the lead was doubled two minutes from the break. A Bywater a corner from the right caused problems in the home side's six yard box and when the ball came back out to him his return cross was met by a glancing header by Buchanan that found the net inside the far post.

Omar Rowe replaced Morgan Ferrier on the restart and the substitute should have added to the tally almost as he came on but shot over the target when well placed to score. Stortford continued to dictate the play and Buchanan had a shot held at the near post by Green stopper Sam Mazurek in the 58<sup>th</sup> minute and the Blues' leading marksman also had a shot blocked with twenty minutes to go after David Hutton had crossed the ball into the middle. Buchanan completed his third hat-trick of the season in the 73<sup>rd</sup> minute when he latched on to a pass down the left flank from Josh Ekim and cutting inside delivered a low shot past Mazurek as the Green appealed for a non-existent offside decision.

A few minutes later Mazurek held the ball at substitute Frankie Merrifield's feet and then the final goal of the evening was notched with eight minutes of normal time remaining. Good work on the left by newcomer David Hutton saw him cross into the box and when Buchanan

went up for the ball with a defender the ball dropped and in a split second the striker, with his back to goal, acrobatically hooked it wide of Mazurek (0-4).

In the final minutes of the tie Kieran Bywater was the victim of a horrendous tackle by a home player in front of the Stortford dug-out and Blues' boss Rod Stringer was sent to the dressing room by referee Callum Chittenden after voicing his displeasure at the incident.