

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3, BATH CITY 2 (VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

A fast flowing contest saw the Blues clinch their first victory at the ProKit (UK) Stadium since late August and their first ever success over the Romans on home soil after seven previous unsuccessful attempts. Playing positive football it was a well deserved win which helped to banish the memory of the display at Oxford City seven days earlier.



Rod Stringer brought in Ian Gayle the new on-loan central defender from Dagenham & Redbridge. Gayle was partnered by Christian Smith whilst Alli Abdullahi returned to the starting eleven. Chris M'Boungou and Omar Rowe dropped to the substitute's bench and there was no place in the squad for Daniel Burns.

With the wind and rain early on in their favour they made a breakthrough in the third minute as Morgan Ferrier netted from an acute angle when put clear by Kieran Bywater. City keeper Steve Phillips then denied Bywater minutes later with an excellent save after a move that had also involved Matt Johnson and Elliott Buchanan. Then shortly afterwards an Anthony Church far post header was wide following a deep cross from the left by Bywater. However, City bounced back with two goals inside four minutes to take the lead. First Dave Pratt latching on a pass through the middle ran unchallenged to beat Tom Lovelock in the 17th minute and then Pratt was on target again in the 21st minute

turning Ben Adelsbury's initial shot past the Blues' stopper.



The match action then swung from one end to the other as Bath skipper Andy Gallinagh shot into the side-netting whilst Ferrier missed a chance to equalise ten minutes from the break when Christian Smith's long pass forward found the striker. Seconds later Stortford made claims for a penalty when Johnny Herd went sprawling after going up with Pratt trying to get his head on a De'Reece Vanderhyde cross into the box from the right. Stortford did get back on level terms a minute from the interval. A concerted attack seemed to fizzle out but Alli Abdullahi cracked a 25 yard drive that was diverted high into the net by leading marksman Elliott Buchanan.



After the restart the Blues had the greater

amount of possession but City looked dangerous when they attacked. Kieran Bywater headed wide in the 50th minute following a run and cross from the right by Buchanan and at the other end a timely tackle by newcomer Ian Gayle robbed Pratt of a chance to shoot at goal after the Bath number nine had cut in towards goal from the left. Both Gallinagh and Ashley Kington were close with efforts from distance for City midway through the half. The Blues though pushed forward a lot in the second half and a Kieran Bywater shot was deflected for a corner. There was an alarm for a split second in the 76th minute when Tom Lovelock fumbled a corner from the right by Kington but the keeper recovered to smother the ball. The winning goal came twelve minutes from the end of normal time when Ferrier struck again from close range after De'Reece Vanderhyde had crossed into the middle from the right and Matt Johnson had a shot half stopped by Phillips.



Omar Rowe had the chance to add a fourth goal late on after fastening on to Tom Lovelock's long kick downfield but the substitute delayed his shot at goal and a defender eventually cleared the danger. The visitors failed to make any impression in the later stages of the contest and Lovelock only had to hold a free-kick into the box by Kington in the 89th minute which he did comfortably.

TEAM INFO AND MATCH DETAILS:

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Johnny Herd; Alli Abdullahi; Christian Smith; Ian Gayle; Kieran Bywater; Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan; Matt Johnson; Morgan Ferrier (Omar Rowe 80).

Unused substitutes: Frankie Merrifield, Josh Ekim, Chris M'Boungou, and David Hutton.



BATH CITY: Steve Phillips; Dan Bowman; Andy Gallinagh; Matt Coupe; Dan Ball; Chas Hemmings (Ashley Yeoman 80); Ashley Kington; Ben Adelsbury; David Pratt; Nick McCootie (Andy Watkins 61); Kaid Mohamed.

Unused substitutes: Sekani Simpson, Bradley Williams and Miles John.

Referee: Mr A Laver

Attendance: 322