

## EBBSFLEET UNITED 4 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2 (VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

A late rally in the closing quarter-of-an-hour saw Stortford score twice but the damage had been done earlier in the match at Stonebridge Road as the league leaguers built up a four goal lead with striker Matt Godden netting a hat-trick.



The Blues found it hard to counter the hosts' aggressive start and not for the first time recently they conceded an early goal. Morgan Ferrier hit the bar shortly after the Fleet had taken the lead but otherwise they found it hard going until just before the break and then improved after half-time.

Skipper Anthony Church, having passed a pre-match fitness test was in Rod Stringer's squad as was De'Reece Vanderhyde who had also missed the Sutton match a week earlier through injury. Chris M'Boungou was on the substitutes' bench alongside Christian Smith for what proved to be the former Chelmsford City player's last selection before leaving for Maidenhead United. In the Ebbsfleet ranks were former Blues Charlie Sheringham, Aiden Palmer and Dean Rance.



The hosts were soon on the front-foot and were ahead in the 6<sup>th</sup> minute. A long diagonal pass found

Danny Kedwell and from his cross to the far post Godden gave Tom Lovelock no chance with a header.



Two minutes later Morgan Ferrier suddenly broke inside from the left flank and blasted a shot from outside the box that cannoned back off the crossbar. The Blues however were struggling to retain possession and Kedwell was close with a rising free-kick in the 14<sup>th</sup> minute before Fleet doubled their lead midway through the half. A concerted attack ended with John-Paul Kissock's shot saved by Lovelock and when the ball ran loose Godden's goalbound effort was blocked and eventually skipper Tom Bonner netted at the second attempt/



More pressure followed as Fleet's Matt Fish's drive from the angle of the box flashed just off target in the 33<sup>rd</sup> minute and the Kent side added a third goal in the 42<sup>nd</sup> minute. Bonner found Kedwell on the left and his cross into the box was converted from ten yards by Godden.

Rod Stringer had to replace Elliott Buchanan minutes from the break after the leading goalscorer failed to shake off the effects of an earlier poor

tackle by Anthony Acheampong. Buchanan was replaced by Dymon Labonne. During stoppage time at the end of the half Stortford nearly reduced the arrears through an own goal. Bonner sliced an intended clearance from De'Reece Vanderhyde's cross from the right into the air and when keeper Brandon Hall misjudged his punch Acheampong was forced to head the ball away from under his own bar. The resultant corner from Omar Rowe saw a George Allen header deflected away for another flag-kick.

Half-time: 3-0

Stortford began the second period brightly and Frankie Merrifield had a shot three minutes after the break pushed round the post and into the side-netting by Fleet stopper Hall. However, in the early stages of the second half Tom Lovelock was still the busier of the two keepers. He saved low shots from Jordan Parkes and Stuart Lewis in a short space of time and then produced a fine save diving to his right to keep out a Parkes free-kick on the hour.

The hosts' fourth goal and with it Godden's hat-trick arrived in the 69<sup>th</sup> minute. A low cross towards the near post from the right by substitute Danny Haynes was met by Godden who shot on the turn past Lovelock.



The Blues rallied from that point and pulled a goal back in the 75<sup>th</sup> minute. From a free-kick just inside the Ebbsfleet half Frankie Merrifield quickly gained possession and went on a solo run through the home defence and finished with a low shot between keeper Hall's legs.

The deficit was further reduced in the 81<sup>st</sup> minute as Ferrier controlled a cross from the right in the box and although the striker was again denied – this time by the post – netted the rebound from close range.

Bywater was not far from adding another with a strong 25 yard attempt whilst Ferrier nearly

clinched a third goal after receiving a pass from Anthony Church.



Stortford looked the more positive side until the final whistle although Charlie Sheringham missed a chance from a Haynes cross and Kedwell put the ball on the roof of the net soon afterwards. Tom Lovelock made an excellent save in injury time when he denied Haynes who had broken clear of George Allen.

Referee Matt Buonassisi showed six yellow cards during the contest – Blues' Anthony Church, De'Reece Vanderhyde and Omar Rowe and Ebbsfleet's Kenny Clark, Anthony Acheampong and Danny Kedwell.

#### TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD:** Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Johnny Herd; Frankie Merrifield; Ian Gayle; George Allen; Kieran Bywater; Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan (Dymon Labonne 44); Morgan Ferrier; Omar Rowe (David Hutton 68).

Unused substitutes: Christian Smith, Josh Ekim and Chris M'Bougou.

**EBBSFLEET UNITED:** Brandon Hall; Matt Fish; Anthony Acheampong (Aiden Palmer 46); Stuart Lewis; Kenny Clark; Tom Bonner; Dean Rance; Jordan Parkes; Danny Kedwell; Matt Godden (Charlie Sheringham 73); John Paul Kissock (Danny Haynes 67). Unused substitutes: Michael West and Jonathan Miles.

Goalscorers: Ebbsfleet United – Matt Godden 6, 42 and 69, and Tom Bonner 23.

Bishop's Stortford – Frankie Merrifield 75 and Kieran Bywater 81.

Referee: Mr M Buonassisi. Attendance: 1,003 .

