

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD 0, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3  
(HERTS SENIOR CUP – 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND)

Three goals in a twenty minute second half spell booked in the end a reasonably comfortable passage to the County Cup quarter-finals for the Blues. They will now host Ware in the next round in January. Stortford's victory over the cup holders was their second win at Vauxhall Road this term having beaten the Tudors 2-1 in the league in the middle of September.

The success went a little way in erasing the memory of the FA Trophy defeat at Tilbury three days previously. Matt Johnson's loan spell was finished and so wasn't included but otherwise with Dymon Labonne included the squad was the same that had lost at Tilbury but Josh Ekim and Chris M'Boungou were both in the starting eleven.

The hosts, kicking down the slope, had most of the early play without creating a serious opening and it was the Blues who went the closest in the early action. After Tom Lovelock had caught the ball well in the 11<sup>th</sup> minute from a corner he punted a long ball upfield which led to Matt Ferrier being fouled just outside the box by Hemel Skipper Ben Herd. Omar Rowe took the resultant free-kick and his effort from 23 yards cannoned off the cross-bar. Another free-kick midway through the half from Josh Ekim was held on the goal-line by stopper Jamie Butler. The remainder of the action to the break was mainly end to end although the Blues were producing several promising moves the more the half progressed.

Half-time: 0-0

Stortford also made a good start after the break and in the first minute Kieran Bywater, Johnny Herd and Morgan Ferrier linked on the left before Ferrier whipped over a cross towards the six yard box and a defender desperately cleared for a corner. From Bywater's free-kick Omar Rowe lifted the ball over the bar from close range.

It wasn't long, however, before Stortford went ahead. In the 52<sup>nd</sup> minute Tom Beere's pass from midfield found Ian Gayle on the right flank and the defender drove a deep high cross to Morgan Ferrier at the far post and when the striker laid the ball back towards the six yard box KIERAN BYWATER found the back of the net with a diving header (0-1). The Tudors came back and had an attacking spell as Jack Smith missed a half chance placing the ball wide of the target from 15 yards in the 56<sup>th</sup> minute and then collecting a loose pass from Johnny Herd a shot from Wilfried Gnahore deflected off of Josh Ekim to hit Tom Lovelock's left-handed post a minute later. Shortly afterwards a rising shot from Mo Shariff was narrowly wide.

However, it was the Blues who scored the next goal in the 68<sup>th</sup> minute. Johnny Herd and Tom Beere were involved in an attack on the left and when Morgan Ferrier cut the ball back across the six yard box OMAR ROWE was at the far post to stab over the line from point-blank range (0-2). It was Rowe's first Stortford goal.

Rod Stringer brought on Elliott Buchanan and De'Reece Vanderhyde to replace Dymon Labonne and Johnny Herd and then within minutes Stortford were three up. An attack seemed to fizzle out but a Hemel defender gave the ball straight back to OMAR ROWE in space just outside the box and he drilled a fine shot inside Butler's left-hand upright (0-3).

Elliott Buchanan, looking sharp, almost netted from an acute angle but Tom Lovelock preserved Blues' clean sheet with an excellent save in the 81<sup>st</sup> minute. Gnahore had crossed from the right and the keeper stopped Jack Smith's powerful header at the second attempt at the foot of the post. In the closing action of the tie Lovelock held a drive from

Kyle Connolly cutting in from the left and at the other end Buchanan smashed a shot across the face of the goal in the 89<sup>th</sup> minute.

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TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; Ian Gayle; Johnny Herd (De'Reece Vanderhyde 70); Josh Ekim; Chris M'Boungou; George Allen; Dymon Labonne (Elliott Buchanan 70); Tom Beere (Alli Abdullahi 78); Morgan Ferrier; Kieran Bywater; Omar Rowe.

Unused substitutes: Frankie Merrifield and David Hutton.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN: Jamie Butler; Ben Herd (Ben Johnson 79); Kyle Connolly; Steve Watt (Colm Parrott 79); Zak Jules; Matt Spring (Joe Fitzgerald 29); Jack Smith; Michael Richens; Wilfried Gnahore; Mo Shariff; Noor Husin.

Unused substitutes: Joseph Findlay-Bada and Cameron Brooks.

Half time: 0-0

Goalscorers: Bishop's Stortford – Kieran Bywater 52, Omar Rowe 68 and 72.

Referee: Mr David Rock

Attendance: 130