

FOOTBALLCV REDS 1, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1  
(FOOTBALL CONFERENCE YOUTH ALLIANCE – DIVISION 'C')

A strong hard working performance particularly in the second half saw the Blues' Academy side through to a share of the points from this match played on a 3G surface at Stamford. Playing their second game in three days, Tim Moylette's side was on the defensive for the majority of the first half but came out after the interval to give a very resolute and disciplined performance against the very skilful and dangerous hosts. Mason Naylor gave Stortford the lead with thirteen minutes to go but a wonder strike five minutes later levelled the scores and a draw was a fair reflection on the outcome of the contest.

The Reds pushed forward from the first whistle and Stortford, who were without two of their influential players in Danny Palmer and Aaron Thomas, were forced to defend with the hosts' Sam Thorpe going close with an angled shot from the edge of the box in the 4<sup>th</sup> minute. In the 12<sup>th</sup> minute an exchange of passes down the middle between Jordan Handscomb and Joe Senior saw the latter finish with a shot that Reds' stopper Dan Perry pushed aside diving to his left.

However, the pressure from the home side continued with Stephen Robinson saving a low shot on the turn from Ilya Fjodorovs and in quick succession the hosts' number nine Sean Coughlan twice nearly gave his side the lead and the same player headed over the target from a good position after a corner from Jordan Neil in the 21<sup>st</sup> minute. The Blues had their own chance to take the lead in the 27<sup>th</sup> minute as a long ball forward from Alex Rogers found Jordan Handscomb running on goal but after chesting the ball down the striker lifted his shot over the keeper and the bar.

Most of the action in the remaining time up to the break was in the Stortford half as they let themselves down with some sloppy play. In the 31<sup>st</sup> minute the Reds' Fjodorovs headed a cross straight at Stephen Robinson and then eight minutes later Jordan Neil struck the bar with an effort from the edge of the area. A minute from the interval Robinson made a fine save to divert an angle shot from Fjodorovs round the far post for a corner.

Half time: 0-0

Having reached the break without conceding seemed to give the Blues heart with skipper Bryn Thorpe leading the way and they started the second half brightly with Mason Naylor shooting narrowly wide of the angle of bar and upright in the 49<sup>th</sup> minute.

However, shortly afterwards Sean Coughlan was allowed a free header at a Neil corner and the ball rebounded off the bar. An entertaining period of play saw end to end action although in the space of a minute first Fjodorovs had a long range attempt turned round the post by Robinson and another corner resulted in a Coughlan header hitting the top of the far post before spinning away for a goal-kick.

The deadlock was broken in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute by an excellent goal from MASON NAYLOR. He dispossessed defender Stephen Pennington just inside the Reds' half and after drifting towards the left he cut inside to unleash a great shot from the edge of the box into the far corner of the net (0-1).

The lead was to only last five minutes though. The equaliser came out of nothing as JORDAN NEIL collected a loose ball 35 yards out from goal and let fly with a shot that finished in the top corner skimming the underside of the bar on the way in (1-1).

In the closing minutes Jack Thomas shot into the side-netting and then when Mason Naylor slipped the ball forward Jordan Handscomb put his shot narrowly past the target.

Bishop's Stortford: Stephen Robinson; Lewis McDonald; Callum O'Brien; Jack Thomas; Alex Warman; Bryn Thorpe; Alex Rogers; Mason Naylor; Jordan Handscomb; Joe Senior; George Bartlam (Ross Gill 57).

Unused substitutes: Sam Brown and Sam Philpot.