

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2 GOSPORT BOROUGH 0 (VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

A strong second half showing from the Blues ensured they stretched their unbeaten run to five matches. Borough, chasing a promotion play-off place, were below par and once they fell behind to a spell of two goals in six minutes around the hour mark there was no coming back for the visitors who hardly threatened. Since the first day of the season's victory over Gosport's neighbours, Havant & Waterlooville, this was easily Stortford's best showing at the ProKit (UK) Stadium.



They started on the front-foot and rarely in the ninety minutes did they allow their opponents any periods of domination. It was a good team performance although a number of individuals stood out. Skipper Anthony Church making his 100th competitive appearance for the Blues and recovered from an ankle injury collected four days earlier in the Herts Senior Cup gave a tireless performance. Also, the returning Ashley Miller along with George Allen and Elliott Buchanan were outstanding.

Robbie Willmott on loan until the end of the campaign from Ebbsfleet United was making his league debut and also in Rod Stringer's squad was the fit-again Frankie Merrifield. Morgan Ferrier was absent due to illness.

The first half hour of the contest was fairly uneventful although Stortford had the edge on proceedings with Buchanan's header from a Corby Moore cross scrambled away by Borough keeper Nathan Ashmore in the 19th minute and Mikel Suarez heading over at the far post following a Willmott free-kick seven minutes later. Church

drove narrowly over the bar in the 33rd minute from 20 yards when Buchanan chested the ball down into his path.



Blues' stopper Ross Fitzsimons was extended for the only time in the match a few minutes later when forced to parry away an effort from George Barker after the Borough player had made a surging run into the penalty area. Chris M'Boungou was shown the only yellow card of the contest by referee Neil Hair after a foul on Justin Bennett five minutes from the break. Then, in the last minute of the half, when Willmott slipped the ball inside to Buchanan it took a great one-handed save by Ashmore to prevent the striker's first time 25 yard low drive from entering the net.

Half-time: 0-0

The Blues kept up the momentum on the restart with Ashmore smothering a far post header from Church in the 47th minute on the goal-line following Willmott's corner from the left and this was followed soon afterwards by Buchanan shooting close past the post after a good move.

National League South's leading marksman Bennett shot over the bar from a good position when hustling M'Boungou and winning possession of a long ball downfield from colleague Ryan Woodford. Then Mike Carter had an effort blocked by the Stortford defence as the visitors mounted some pressure.

However, it was the Blues who took the lead in the 56th minute. An attack on the right flank involving

Buchanan, Moore and Miller ended with Miller's cross from the right being met by Willmott who had made a diagonal run into the far edge of the box and his rising shot found the roof of the net for his first Blues' goal.



The lead was doubled six minutes later as Church won the ball just inside the Gosport box and passed to Suarez who in turn set Buchanan clear through the middle to beat Ashmore with a low shot..



Stortford were comfortable to the end and nearly extended their lead on a couple of occasions with Ashmore saving low from Suarez in the 65th minute and Willmott shooting over from an angle ten minutes later. A late header over the bar from Bennett from a Barker corner was all the Hampshire side could muster in the closing stages.

TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Ross Fitzsimons; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Josh Ekim; Chris M'Boungou; George Allen; Corby Moore; Anthony Church; Mikel Suarez; Elliott Buchanan (Frankie Merrifield 80); Robbie Willmott.

Unused substitutes: Alli Abdullahi, Kenzer Lee, De'Reece Vanderhyde, and Tom Lovelock.

GOSPORT BOROUGH: Nathan Ashmore; TJ Cuthbertson (Tony Lee 64); Rory Williams (Elliott Wheeler 20); Mike Carter; Andy Robinson; Ryan Woodford; George Barker; Ben Harding; Dan Wooden; Justin Bennett; Adam Wilde (Adam Brice 76).

Unused substitutes: Jamie White and Liam McDevitt

Half time: 0-0

Goalscorers: Bishop's Stortford – Robbie Willmott 56, Elliott Buchanan 62.



Referee: Mr Neil Hair

Attendance: 312