

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN 0  
(VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

A classic goal from Mikel Suarez in the 90<sup>th</sup> minute won this match for Stortford. Both sides were in with a shout of winning until the end with the contest being of an end-to-end nature for virtually the entire game. But it was the Blues who had the more clear-cut opportunities to break the deadlock and it was they who were successful with this their third victory over the Tudors this term with no goals conceded. Keeper Ross Fitzsimons dealt well with the crosses that were put into his box but he had few if any direct shots at his goal during the course of the night. Stortford's ninth match unbeaten in all competitive games also lifted them up to eighth in the Vanarama National League South table and took them above the visitors whose only second away league defeat of the campaign this was.

The victory was achieved without top goalscorer Elliott Buchanan and Josh Ekim who were on the bench with slight hamstring problems. George Allen who was unavailable was also missing. Kenzer Lee was in the middle of the defence for the first time for several months and Frankie Merrifield and Morgan Ferrier were also included by Rod Stringer in the starting eleven.

The early action was very open with play swinging from one end to the other but Stortford had the edge. Mikel Suarez had already headed wide before he just missed connecting at the far post with a deep free-kick from Robbie Willmott in the 11<sup>th</sup> minute. Skipper Anthony Church headed over a Willmott corner in the 22<sup>nd</sup> minute and then, six minutes later, Corby Moore forced the Tudors' stopper Jamie Butler to dive to his left to keep out a 20 yard shot after the Hemel defence had failed to clear a Johnny Herd free-kick properly.

On the half-hour Hemel's Andrius Laucys was narrowly wide from 25 yards and soon afterwards Graeme Montgomery wasn't far off target from distance when Ross Fitzsimons' goal was unguarded. However, the nearest to a goal before the break came in the 36<sup>th</sup> minute as the visitors' skipper Ben Herd headed away a goalbound header from Morgan Ferrier from under the bar after Church, at the far post, had headed back Robbie Willmott's free-kick.

The Blues continued to threaten before the break with Suarez having a header held by Butler in the 42<sup>nd</sup> minute and then in added time at the end of the half Herd's long throw into the box saw Suarez flick a header goalwards and Butler eventually hold the loose ball as Ferrier and Church closed in.

Half-time: 0-0

Plenty of endeavour was evident from both sides on the restart with several good moves to the edges of both boxes. The Blues, attacking the Town end in the second half, again looked to have the greater cutting edge and around the midway point of the half went close on several occasions. Butler failed to hold a Corby Moore drive but managed to retake the ball as Ferrier was about to pounce. Then a cross to the near post by Willmott in the 67<sup>th</sup> minute resulted in Church glancing wide and two minutes later the skipper headed a Willmott corner over the bar.

Anthony Church was forced out of the action a little later with a thigh injury and he was replaced by Alli Abdullahi. At the same time De'Reece Vanderhyde came on for Morgan Ferrier. With the match entering the closing ten minutes an overhead kick by substitute Dennis Oli following Graeme Montgomery's cross was sliced across his own goal for a corner by Chris M'Boungou who otherwise had a fine match.

The contest had just entered its' final minute when the all important winner arrived. De'Reece Vanderhyde, a few yards inside the Hemel half, slipped the ball out to the right flank where Robbie Willmott took it forward before delivering a great cross towards the far upright and MIKEL SUAREZ timed his run and jump perfectly to bullet the ball high past Butler.

The visitors had four minutes of added time to try to level the scores but they were unable to threaten at all during that time.

Referee Carl Fitch brandished yellow cards to Kenzer Lee, Morgan Ferrier and Mikel Suarez during the match as well as the Tudors' Andrius Laucys and James Potton.

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TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Ross Fitzsimons; Ashley Miller; Johnny Herd; Frankie Merrifield; Kenzer Lee; Chris M'Boungou; Corby Moore; Anthony Church (Alli Abdullahi 76); Mikel Suarez; Morgan Ferrier (De'Reece Vanderhyde 76); Robbie Willmott.

Unused substitutes: Elliott Buchanan, Josh Ekim and Tom Lovelock.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN: Jamie Butler; Ben Herd; Mitch Brundle; Andrius Laucys (Terrell Forbes 76); Oliver Thorne; Matt Spring; Adam Morgan (Jamie Slabber 62) ; Michael Richens; James Potton; Luke Thomas (Dennis Oli 76); Graeme Montgomery.

Unused substitutes: Dean Brennan and Jack Smith.

Half time: 0-0

Goalscorer: Bishop's Stortford – Mikel Suarez 90.

Referee: Mr Carl Fitch

Attendance: 303