

# BATH CITY 2 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2

## (VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

Elliott Buchanan continued his recent rich run of scoring form with another brace of goals the second of which rescued a point for the Blues in the first of three added minutes at the end of the match. His double at Twerton Park also meant that the sharpshooter climbed to the top of Vanarama National League South list of goalscorers.



The point for Stortford was deserved despite suffering an abject first forty five minutes when they misdirected passes and posed little threat to the hosts. They had gone a goal behind before the break but gave a much improved second half display to travel home with a share of the points.

Rod Stringer made one change in his starting eleven as Frankie Merrifield fully recovered from an ankle injury replaced Byron Lawrence. Ashley Miller, suffering with tendonitis, and Mikel Suarez, still recovering from a hamstring injury, both travelled but were not included in the squad

Facing a team struggling in the league and themselves looking to build on a three match unbeaten run, the Blues were kicking up the slope in the first period. They failed to settle from the off and fell behind in the 11<sup>th</sup> minute. De'Reece

Vanderhyde fouled striker Dave Pratt on the left and 25 yards from goal and LIAM KELLY beat Craig King at his near post with the free-kick which, after going over the defensive wall, bounced in front of the diving keeper and finished in the roof of the net (1-0).

Kelly tested King again in the 18<sup>th</sup> minute with a shot from the edge of the box but the Stortford stopper held on to the ball. The Blues posed no threat until the 24<sup>th</sup> minute when a quality pass from Robbie Willmott found Merrifield on the left but the midfielder delayed his cross and the danger passed. Stortford were second best before the break but although the hosts had the edge they too created little up front. Five minutes from half-time a Johnny Herd cross was nodded across the area by skipper Anthony Church but Buchanan's volley from 12 yards was blocked by a defender. Then, a minute later, Merrifield was allowed to take the ball forward but his attempt at goal from just inside the box was well off target. The last action of the half saw a Robbie Willmott free-kick on the left just evade Kenzer Lee running in at the back post.

After such a poor half Rod Stringer made a double substitution on the restart with Josh Ekim and Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson replacing Merrifield and Alli Abdullahi and the substitutions soon paid dividends and gave Stortford fresh impetus. A minute after the break Johnny Herd, Buchanan and Willmott were all involved in an attack that ended with Buchanan heading Willmott's cross wide and, looking much livelier, the Blues won their first corner of the contest in the 50<sup>th</sup> minute.

Stortford's first equaliser came on the hour. Buchanan took a corner on the right and when the ball came back out to the striker he advanced and drove in a low shot that City keeper Steve Phillips parried away at his near upright. However, the ball still wasn't cleared and in the ensuing melee near the post the Roman's Dave Pratt was ruled by Referee Samuel Allison to have pushed George Allen. ELLIOTT BUCHANAN duly gave Phillips no chance from the penalty spot (1-1).

The Blues were now looking confident and four minutes later a free-kick from Willmott grazed the head of George Allen to go wide.

With 14 minutes of normal time remaining the Romans brought on substitute Nick McCootie and the big busy forward soon had an effect. Within a minute of coming on his run on the left saw Pratt dummy over his cross to leave another substitute, Dan Bowman, with a simple chance to score but he lifted the ball over the bar from six yards. However, within another ninety seconds, City had retaken the lead. Andy Gallinagh and Bowman were involved in a move on the right and when Bowman crossed into the middle McCootie forced the ball forward to run loose for DAVE PRATT, who has a habit of netting against the Blues, to stretch and divert it past King from close range (2-1).

It looked as though Stortford were going to leave empty-handed but in the first minute of stoppage time they claimed another goal to level the match. This was through good work by the two half-time substitutes. An excellent pass from his own half by Ekim found Fortnam-Tomlinson who raced down the left flank before delivering a low cross into the middle where ELLIOTT BUCHANAN fired past Phillips from a central position 12 yards out at the second attempt after the keeper had initially half-saved the first effort (2-2).

Although the match was never ill-tempered Referee Allison managed to show seven yellow cards during the match. Stortford's De'Reece Vanderhyde, Anthony Church and Willmott and City's Andy Gallinagh, Tyler Harvey, Pratt and Ashley Kington all found their way into his notebook.

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**TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-**

**BISHOP'S STORTFORD:** Craig King; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Johnny Herd; Alli Abdullahi (Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson 46); Kenzer Lee; George Allen; Corby Moore (Byron Lawrence 82); Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan; Robbie Willmott; Frankie Merrifield (Josh Ekim 46).

Unused substitutes: Jack Fowler and Tom Lovelock

**BATH CITY:** Steve Phillips; Andy Gallinagh; Danny Greenslade; Jack Batten; Dan Ball; Chas Hemmings (Dan Bowman 56); Billy Murphy; Liam Kelly; Tyler Harvey (Nick McCootie 76); Dave Pratt; Ashley Kington.

Unused substitutes: Brad Williams and Josh Hutchinson

Goalscorers: Bishop's Stortford – Elliott Buchanan 60 (pen.) and 90+1

Bath City – Liam Kelly 11, Dave Pratt 79

Referee: Mr Samuel Allison

Attendance: 497