

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 3, OXFORD CITY 0 (VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH)

Stortford's league status in National League South was virtually assured following this relatively straightforward victory over City. The result left the Blues seven points away from the bottom three and the same number off the play-off places.



Their opponents, at the ProKit (UK) Stadium, who only named three substitutes were weakened through injuries and well below par. The Blues, were also affected by injuries, but were the better side from the beginning and remained the stronger side for most of the game.



Rod Stringer made several changes to the side that had lost on Good Friday at Dartford. Tom Lovelock replaced Craig King in goal while Jack Fowler, who played impressively, made a first start and partnered George Allen in the centre of the defence as Kenzer Lee had suffered a hamstring injury in training. Josh Ekim was brought back into the midfield as was Byron Lawrence. There was a welcome return to the squad for Anthony Furlonge after such a long absence through injury. He was named on the bench and would replace De'Reece Vanderhyde late in the match for his first appearance for Stortford since

early last September. Also on the bench was Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson who came on just after the hour mark and proceeded to notch two goals in the space of his first sixteen minutes on the pitch. Ashley Miller, Mikel Suarez and Frankie Merrifield were all absent through injury.



In a quiet start skipper Anthony Church was close with a glancing header from a Robbie Willmott corner and in the fifth minute Byron Lawrence made tracks for goal down the inside left channel but the midfielder's shot lacked power and direction and his shot was held by Laurie Walker diving to his left. City's Adrian Santiago found the net in the 12th minute with a hooked shot at the back post following a cross from the left by Paul Stonehouse but an offside decision was given as the visitors started to settle.



Then Oxford skipper Darren Pond's 12 yard shot in the 23rd minute was cleared away from near the line by defender Jack Fowler following a short cross into the middle by Marlon Jackson. The breakthrough came in the 32nd minute. There was a concerted build-up of momentum on the right and

Elliott Buchanan slipped the ball through for CORBY MOORE to advance into space from the flank and beat Walker at the third attempt after the stopper had twice parried out angled shots – his third attempt saw him virtually able to walk the ball into the net (1-0).

The Blues had the edge until the break although there were openings at either end.

Half time: 1-0

The Blues were close to doubling their lead three minutes after the restart with Elliott Buchanan seeing a shot tipped away for a corner at the near post by Walker after the leading marksman had collected a pass from Corby Moore. Oxford's Bradley Bubb threatened shortly afterwards but in the 61st minute Robbie Willmott almost took advantage of some slack play yards from goal by the visitors' keeper and his defence but Willmott's shot spun inches wide of an upright. Two minutes later Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson replaced Byron Lawrence. Elliott Buchanan almost broke through middle when fastening on to a Josh Ekim through pass but there was always the worry holding a slender lead that City would find an equaliser. And in a short space of time Darren Pond volleyed just wide and then David King cut in from the corner flag on the right and forced Tom Lovelock to block away his acute angled shot for a corner.

However, Blues' fans could rest easy a few minutes later as although Corby Moore fired wide from a Robbie Willmott cross in the 73rd minute the second goal arrived with fifteen minutes of normal time remaining. A throw up the right touch-line by De'Reece Vanderhyde deflected off of Buchanan and a quick flick of the ball from Willmott fed BRADLEY FORTNAM-TOMLINSON with a great pass for the substitute to run on and finish low into the net past Walker (2-0).

It was the substitute's first goal for Stortford but just four minutes later the same combination were involved as Willmott crossed from the right and FORTNAM-TOMLINSON volleyed home at the far post (3-0).

Fortnam-Tomlinson could easily have grabbed a hat-trick with six minutes left but he was foiled by defender Adrian Santiago's fine interception of another Robbie Willmott centre.



The visitors failed to net a consolation goal with substitutes Tyriq Hunte and Jon Arzamendi missing chances near the end. In the 88th minute Hunte shot straight at Lovelock and then in the first minute of stoppage time Arzamendi's back-post header from Reece Fleet's free-kick was saved by Lovelock.



Referee Lee Betts kept a clean sheet by not showing any cards during the contest.

TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde (Anthony Furlonge 46); Johnny Herd; Josh Ekim; Jack Fowler; George Allen; Corby Moore; Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan; Robbie Willmott (Hammed Lawal 86); Byron Lawrence (Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson 63).
Unused substitutes: Alli Abdullahi and Craig King.
OXFORD CITY: Laurie Walker; Matt Bevans (Julen Lafuente 65); Jose Lapoujade; Reece Fleet; David King; Lee Henderson (Jon Arzamendi 46); Marlon Jackson; Darren Pond; Bradley Bubb; Adrian Santiago; Paul Stonehouse (Tyriq Hunte 76).
Unused substitutes: None.

Goalscorers: Bishop's Stortford – Corby Moore 32, Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson 75 and 79
Referee: Mr Lee Betts , Attendance: 332