

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

The Blues' defence kept a clean sheet for the second successive match in an uninspiring contest at Privett Park. The meeting of the two sides definitely had an end-of-season feel to it as the hosts looked to end a five match losing run whilst Stortford were looking to build on the previous week's victory over Oxford City.



The end result was a game that produced few chances and really only came to life in the last half-hour when Stortford had the opportunities to have taken all three points.

It was also a meeting of two of the top three leading goalscorers in the Vanarama National League South, Elliott Buchanan and Borough's Justin Bennett, but both fired blanks on the afternoon. Rod Stringer made one change to his starting line-up with Alli Abdullahi replacing Josh Ekim in midfield.



The hosts threatened first with Rory Williams volleying across the face of the goal in the 4th minute following a deep cross by TJ Cuthbertson and as the match took time to settle the Blues threatened for first time in the eighth minute Corby

Moore slipping the ball to the left for Buchanan to cut inside and see keeper George Legg divert the ball for a corner at the near post.

Stortford were indebted to George Allen in the 13th minute after Dan Wooden crossed from the left and the central defender launched himself to block a close range effort from Williams. A difficult pitch made constructive football difficult but the sides traded punches as Buchanan shot into the side-netting from the right whilst a TJ Cuthbertson strong drive was held low at his near post by Tom Lovelock. The Blues suffered a blow shortly after the half-hour as Byron Lawrence, having tweaked a hamstring, was forced to leave the pitch. The midfielder was replaced by Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson.



The only incidents of note in the period up until the break were Jack Fowler's first time volley over the near angle of the goal following a Robbie Willmott corner on the right and a Justin Bennett attempt from distance that cleared the bar.

Half time: 0-0

A similar pattern of play followed after the restart with misplaced passes from each side being the rule rather than the exception. In the 53rd minute a stooping header from Dan Wooden from a Cuthbertson cross was easily held by Lovelock. Then matters became lively coming up to the hour mark when a terrible late challenge from behind on Buchanan by Charlie Higgins near the halfway line caused a flashpoint. Higgins was booked and following the melee involving handbags that followed, Gosport's Mike Carter also collected a

yellow card from referee Adam Penwell. During the fracas Jack Fowler had fallen to the ground and had his ankle stamped on and although the defender tried to carry on it was clear that he couldn't continue and he was replaced by Anthony Furlonge. A little later Penwell sent Gosport manager Alex Pike to the Stand for over-zealous protestations at an assistant referee.



Borough's Bennett tried a shot from the edge of the box that was held by Lovelock and at the other end a volley from Alli Abdullahi midway through the half was two foot over the bar. In the final twenty minutes or so it looked as if the match would drift in Stortford's favour as a number of opportunities came their way. In the 69th minute a long pass downfield deflected off the top of defender Sam Pearce's head to fall into Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson's path but home stopper George Legg was off his line instantly to punch the ball away. Then there was a clear chance for the Blues thirteen minutes from the end of normal time with Fortnam-Tomlinson switching the ball out to the right for Willmott to cross into the box but unfortunately Moore headed over the bar from ten yards. A minute later Buchanan crossed from the other flank and Moore saw his header, this time, gathered fairly comfortably by Legg. It was Tom Lovelock's turn to see action shortly afterwards as he had to get down quickly to catch hold of a low cross from Cuthertson in the six yard box. Coming up to the end of the ninety minutes skipper Anthony Church twice had headers caught by Legg after Willmott crosses whilst Lovelock held on to an acute angled attempt from Gosport substitute Adam Wilde.



There was more action in the three minutes of stoppage time. Moore set up Fortnam-Tomlinson to cut in from the left and the substitute's fierce angled drive was kept out by Legg's full length dive to his left. Then when the loose ball came back into Moore's possession the midfielder aimed another shot at goal but a defender blocking the effort sent it rebounding away from goal. Seconds later Buchanan was almost on the end of a move on the left that had seen Fortnam-Tomlinson surge in from the flank towards the near post. Apart from the two Borough players cautioned in the fracas, Rory Williams was shown a yellow card during the match as were the Blues' George Allen and Anthony Church.

Full time: 0-0

TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH DETAILS:-
BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Johnny Herd; Alli Abdullahi; George Allen; Jack Fowler (Anthony Furlonge 63); Corby Moore; Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan; Robbie Willmott; Byron Lawrence (Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson 33).
 Unused substitutes: Josh Ekim, Hammed Lawal and Frankie Merrifield.

GOSPORT BOROUGH: George Legg; TJ Cuthbertson; Rory Williams; Mike Carter; Brett Poate; Sam Pearce; Ryan Woodford; Tom Dunford (Adam Wilde 80); Charlie Higgins; Justin Bennett; Dan Wooden.
 Unused substitutes: Perry Ryan, Adam Brice, Connor May and Connor Hoare.

Referee: Mr Adam Penwell

Attendance: 327