

BISHOP'S STORTFORD 1, ST ALBANS CITY 0 (HERTS CHARITY CUP FINAL)

The Blues lifted the Herts Charity Cup for the fifth time in six seasons and the third year in succession with a 1-0 win against City at Cheshunt's Theobald Lane ground. Almost predictably it was striker Elliott Buchanan who netted the only goal of this low-key contest and it was his 33rd in all competitions this term.



The all Vanarama National League South final didn't reach any great heights in the entertainment ratings but both sides were fielding below strength teams with Stortford having a number of injury concerns whilst the Saints had more important matters on their minds facing a league fixture four days later that could decide whether they stayed in the Vanarama National or be relegated.



In a tie that produced few clear cut openings, Stortford had the better of the first half but

were forced to defend in depth after the break especially late on. However, the defence gave little away and Tom Lovelock was in excellent form to deal with a number crosses into the box.



Rod Stringer's side was without Johnny Herd who was suffering from conjunctivitis and Byron Lawrence stepped into an unfamiliar role on the left side of defence. There was an early near miss for Stortford in the fourth minute when De'Reece Vanderhyde crossed low into the area and Buchanan fractionally missed the ball which passed the far post by a whisker. A good move in the 10th minute finished with a Frankie Merrifield shot comfortably held by former Blues keeper Joe Welch who was the City skipper. Just three minutes later Merrifield should have done better. A cheeky back-heel from Alli Abdullahi set up Corby Moore to cross to the far upright where Merrifield headed wide of the target. The only time Lovelock was seriously tested in the first half was when he saved a Billy Gibson free-kick high at his near post in the 22nd minute. A minute later at the other end Moore was close with an angled effort past the far post after Merrifield had laid the ball back to him. It was Moore who played an essential part in the Blues goal after 27

minutes. He struck a great volleyed pass from his own half into the path of Robbie Willmott running down the left flank and when the on-loan Willmott drilled the ball low across the six yard box Buvhanan timed his run perfectly to convert from close range.



Stortford continued to call the tune before the break as Willmott with a driven shot saved at the second attempt by Welch after a run in the 33rd minute and Moore with a shot from distance threatened to increase the lead.



Stringer had to rejig his side at the interval as George Allen was suffering with a thigh

problem. Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson replaced Allen whilst Vanderhyde moved into the middle of the defence alongside Kenzer Lee and Willmott moved back to the right-hand side of the defence.



Welch deflected a Merrifield cross from the left away for a corner soon after the restart and then Fortnam-Tomlinson nearly got on the scoresheet in the 53rd minute when just beaten to the ball by the Saints keeper following an attack down the middle involving Abdullahi and Merrifield. St Albans gradually became the more dominant side in midfield as the tie progressed. A Lee Allinson corner in the 85th minute resulted in a melee in an around the six yard box before a grounded Lovelock smothered the ball from substitute Eddie Oshodi. The a minute later the Stortford keeper for once mistimed his interception to catch the ball above the head of substitute James Kaloczi but fortunately Oshodi struck the loose ball over the bar.

The Saints continued to push forward in the remaining time which included three added minutes but Stortford safely battled through to the final whistle after which Blues skipper Anthony Church collected the silverware.

Full time: 0-1

TEAM DETAILS AND MATCH
DETAILS:-



BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Tom Lovelock; De'Reece Vanderhyde; Byron Lawrence; Alli Abdullahi; Kenzer Lee; George Allen (Bradley Fortnam-Tomlinson 46); Corby Moore; Anthony Church; Elliott Buchanan; Robbie Willmott; Frankie Merrifield (Mikel Suarez 77).

Unused substitutes: Oliver Humphrey, Josh Ekim and Ashley Miller.

ST ALBANS CITY: Joe Welch; Scott Thomas (Eddie Oshodi 74); Tom Bender;

Lee Allinson; Darren Locke; Andrew Iwediuno; Danny Green; Al Bangura; Harry Anderson (Lee Chappell 46); Jack Green (James Kaloczi 74); Billy Gibson..
Unused substitutes: Sam Corcoran and Louie Theophanous.



Goalscorer: Bishop's Stortford – Elliott Buchanan 27

Referee: Rob Smith

Attendance: 211