

Royston Town 2 Blues 2

(Herts Charity Cup quarter-final, Blues won 4-2 on pens)

Blues reached the semi-final of the Charity Cup with a penalty shoot-out win at Royston Town, on Tuesday

Ryan Auger scored straight from kick-off to give Gordon Boateng's side the lead after just four seconds, but the hosts twice came from behind to send the game into a shoot-out following a 2-2 draw.

But Stortford scored all four penalties as they extended their winning run to 18 games in their last 19 ties in the competition.

Blues have now won 18 of their last 19 Charity Cup ties, and are just one step away from a seventh straight final.

Auger's goal was timed at five seconds as he hammered the kick-off over the head of Crows' keeper Watson, and although the ball hit the bar, it rebounded into the net off the unfortunate goalie.

It is believed to be the fastest goal in the Blues' 142-year history, and the tie is also probably unique in that the visitors scored with the first and last kicks of the game.



The home side saw a goal disallowed for offside in the minute and they continued to press with Joe Wright bringing off a good save in the 17th minute when he tipped Fehmi's shot around the post.

The Crows levelled the score seven minutes before the break when Cullen was left free to hit a diagonal shot into the far corner from 15 yards.

After Blues had started the second half well, Chase O'Neill and Ross Elmson entered the action on the hour mark and within a minute the Blues were back in front when Ashley Taylor-Forbes netted from close range after the hosts had failed to clear the ball.

The lead lasted only seven minutes before a thunderbolt from substitute Ryan Ingrey levelled things, and although both sides had chances to win the game in normal time, the score stayed level.

A (welcome) change of rules in the competition meant the crowd were spared extra time, and the tie went straight to penalties.

The hosts took the first spot kick, and regular penalty taker Fehmi skied his effort out of the ground (ie was later found on the outskirts of Baldock) before skipper Johnny Herd comfortably converted to put his side ahead.

Bradshaw sent Wright the wrong way with Royston's second kick but Mikel Suarez's well-struck effort crept in at the left hand post to make it 2-1.

Mentis beat Wright with an effort straight down the middle but a perfect Dominic Green shot went into the top corner to put Blues 3-2 ahead.

Wright saved well from Watters, before Jermain Osei fired past Watson to seal the victory with a penalty to spare.