

# CONCORD RANGERS 0 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0

**This was hardly a classic at the Aspect Arena with most of the excitement and chances coming in the final 20 minutes or so as the two sides battled out a 0-0 draw.**

Both teams seemed to lack confidence in the contest and the result was probably about right although the Beachboys had the edge on possession

Gordon Boateng made a number of changes in his starting line-up following the defeat at the weekend and the side included new signing Harry Osborne who partnered Danny Rumens in the centre of defence.

Rangers' new loan signing from Maidstone United, Dumebi Dumaka, was just wide with a header in the third minute and shortly afterwards the Blues nearly took the lead with an own goal as the hosts' skipper James White headed a high swinging cross from Evans Kouassi past his own keeper but also narrowly wide of an upright.

The play was very scrappy and both sides seemed devoid of ideas. Little of note occurred until the 31<sup>st</sup> minute when Joe Wright saved White's 20 yard free-kick after Osborne had been harshly penalised for handling a thunderbolt shot from Adam Topley.

The Stortford stopper was in action again a minute later holding a shot on the turn by Dumaka. Then ten minutes from the break Sam Collins was narrowly over with an effort from wide on the left.

## **Half time: 0-0**

The Blues were the first to nearly go ahead after the break as a fine cross-field pass in the 52<sup>nd</sup> minute from Chace O'Neill found Paul Rodgers advancing up the right flank and the defender finished with rising drive close past the near post.

Wright made a couple of good stops from the Beachboys' Alex Akrofi and Mark Onyemah whilst Gordon Boateng made a double substitution before the hour mark with Josh Ekim and Bradley Woods-Garness entering the fray. In the 66<sup>th</sup> minute a long throw from Jack Lampe was met Dumaka with an angled header that struck high up on the Blues' bar before rebounding away.

The match was now opening out and in the 74<sup>th</sup> minute a Topley drive wasn't far off target for Concord whilst a Woods-Garness volley a minute later was pushed round the post by Rangers' stopper Ben McNamara for a corner. Lampe was close with a glancing header from a Collins corner whilst, for the Blues, Osborne headed over the bar following a Josh Ekim free-kick.

Joe Wright then made two excellent saves in quick succession to keep Stortford in the game in the 83<sup>rd</sup> minute. Firstly he dived to his right to push away a swerving low free-kick from former Blues favourite Steve Cawley and then he blocked away Dumebi Dumaka's follow-up shot.

Stortford then had a chance to settle the match seconds later with Woods-Garness crossing deep from the right past the far post where substitute Jermaine Osei laid the ball into the six yard box but Evans Kouassi's close range goalbound flick was well blocked by McNamara.

Wright tipped over the bar from Dumaka in the 85<sup>th</sup> minute however during the three minutes of added time at the end of the match it was all Stortford with particular heavy pressure after an Ekim corner on the left that saw the ball rebound in and around the six yard box before Bradley Woods-Garness finally had a shot deflect off a defender over the bar.

Blues: Joe Wright, Paul Rodgers, Johnny Herd, Lee Sawyer (Josh Ekim 56), Harry Osborne, Danny Rumens, Evans Kouassi, Ioannis Varouxakis (Bradley Woods-Garness 56), Sam Smith, Chace O'Neill, Dominic Green (Jermaine Osei 70).

Unused substitutes: Tarik Moore-Azille and Tom Lovelock.

Rangers: Ben McNamara, Rob Girdlestone, Mark Onyemah, Jay Dowie, Jack Lampe, Marvin Expiteta, Adam Topley, James White (Joao Carlos 73), Dumebi Dumaka, Alex Akrofi (Steve Cawley 61), Sam Collins.

Unused substitutes: Audrius Laucys and Harvey Hodd.

Referee: L Venamore.

Attendance: 234