

BLUES 0 MARGATE 2

There was no Elliott Buchanan for Margate, but they left the ProKit UK Stadium with all three Vanarama South points on Saturday.



The eagerly awaited return of last season's top scorer and Blues' player-of-the-year failed to materialise as Buchanan was injured, and the home side were also without a key player to skipper Johnny Herd being unavailable but it was the visitors who deservedly made the trip back to Kent with the win.



For Blues, it was their fifth straight home loss of the campaign, and they now sit just one place ahead of the drop zone.

Gate had the early edge with Vas Karagiannis firing wide of the near post in the 10th minute. Visiting keeper Lewis Ward dealt comfortably with efforts from Evans Kouassi and Chace O'Neill whilst Harry Osborne shot over from close range following a Josh Ekim free-kick. Both sides then nearly took the lead from further

free-kicks as Alex Osborn saw his effort saved at the near post by Joe Wright and at the other end Dominic Green's kick skimmed off the top of the bar.



Stortford fell behind two minutes after the interval when Josh Ekim lost possession allowing for Blue Michael Thalassitis to race down the middle and shoot past Wright. The hosts then had the majority of the possession until the end but rarely looked to endanger the Margate defence except in the 72nd minute when Bradley Woods-Garness ran clear from the left but scuffed his shot wide of the far upright.

The visitors' lead was doubled from the spot in the 84th minute as a low cross from the right by Karagiannis was judged by referee Pollard to have been handled by Blues' debutant Marvel Ekpiteta and Karagiannis himself stepped up to beat Wright with the penalty.



A third goal could have arrived a minute later as Harry Osborne slipped for Daniel

Akindayini to break clear but the striker shot wide of the target. Stortford nearly grabbed a late consolation goal as substitute Ioannis Varouxakis headed a Green cross straight at Ward and although fellow sub Jermaine Osei did find the back of the net in added time the “goal” was ruled out for offside.



Blues: Wright, Rodgers, Ekpiteta, Ekim (Sawyer 52), Osborne, Rumens, Woods-Garness (Osei 73), Kouassi, Smith (Varouxakis 73), O’Neill, Green.

Unused substitutes: Moore-Azille, Lovelock

MARGATE: Ward, Sessegnon, Brett Johnson (Tumwa 82), Matt Johnson, Mambo, Parry, Karagiannis, Donnelly (Phipp 23), Thalassitis, Akindayini, Osborn.

Unused substitutes: Cash, Bull.

Referee: C Pollard. Attendance: 362