

Ware 3 Blues 7



Blues reached their 11th county cup final in eight years as a dominant first half performance saw Ware beaten 7-3 at Wodson Park, on Tuesday.

The Blue Brazil will now make the familiar trip to the County Ground in Letchworth to face Hitchin Town in the Herts Senior Cup final, with the game likely to be staged in early April.



A pair of Shomani Barnwell goals together with efforts from Alex Stephenson, Paul Rodgers, Aaron Greene and Phil Walsh meant the tie was effectively over at half-time before Luke Callendar opened his account for Stortford with a second half penalty to wrap things up. It took only four minutes for Blues to open the scoring, and Ware were lucky not to be down to ten men when Alaa Oujdi was clearly the last man as he brought down Corey Davidson but – unlike Emmanuel Adebawale in the previous round – he only received a yellow card.

The free-kick gave set the scene for the defensive masterclass that was follow (at both ends) as keeper Russell Harley spilled Callander's free-kick into the path of young defender Stephenson, and he made no mistake from close range for his first Stortford goal.



The lead was doubled within three minutes as skipper Phil Walsh also notched his first Blues' goal when the home side failed to clear a corner and he fired home.

The deluge continued in the ninth minute as Barnwell beat the offside trap to calmly fire home Hardy to put his side 3-0 ahead.



Callander saw an effort cleared off the line before the 19th minute saw Paul Rodgers become the third defender to net for the visitors as Blues' longest serving outfield player slotted home a great low cross from Davidson. The hosts pulled a goal back in the 21st minute when Stortford failed to deal with a free-kick, allowing Gareth Price to hit an angled shot past Harry Voss, but within three minutes it was 5-1

when Rose clearly handled the ball in the area and Barnwell coolly slotted him the penalty. The crowd had to wait a whole nine minutes before the first half scoring was completed as Aaron Green twisted and before curling home a delightful effort from 20 yards for the best goal of the night.



Sam Ford replaced Barnwell at half-time, but Ware pulled a goal back eight minutes into the second half when Soraf thrashed into the top corner through a crowd of bodies.



Antonio Lazzari forced a fine save from Harley before Ware made it 6-3 in the 62nd minute as Price forced Voss into a good low save only for the ball to fall for Oyibo to fire home the rebound.

Any thoughts of a comeback from the hosts were killed off in the 75th minute when Harley brought Rogers down in the box after the Blues' defender had skinned the full-back, and Callander became the fourth Stortford to player on the night to net his first goal for the club with a well struck penalty. There was still time for a cameo appearance from player-coach Cliff Akurang, but Blues will now look to get down to the important business of retaining National League South status.

Blues: H Voss, P Rodgers, A Stephenson, A Lazarri, P Walsh (E Ronto 74), E Adebowale, C Davidson, H Hickford, L Callander (C Akurang (82), S Barnwell (S Ford 46), A Greene. Att:94