

# PRE-SEASON ROUND-UP

## Blues 1 West Ham United XI 1

**Blues extended their unbeaten home run to two games as they held a West Ham United XI to a 1-1 draw at the ProKit (UK) Stadium, on Saturday.**

Darren Foxley's 76th minute goal was enough to give Kevin Watson's team a share of the spoils as they made a good start to their pre-season campaign.

The visitors brought a young side to the home of football, with most of their 19-man squad comprising of academy players together with three older trialists including a 6'6" Norwegian goalkeeper.



The visitors had the best of the first half but Blues went close on several occasions in the closing stages with Christian Owusu seeing an effort blocked and Ryan Richfond firing wide before the impressive George Casey saw a low free-kick tipped wide by the giant.



The Hammers went ahead immediately after the break when a substitute lobbed Harry Voss from just outside the box, and they twice went close to doubling their advantage before the hour mark.

Blues' equaliser came with 14 minutes remaining as Calvin Ekpiteta - cousin of Marvel - combined with Jordan Palmer before the latter sent a perfect cross for Foxley to net from close range.



Foxley twice went close to putting Blues ahead in the closing stages as they finished strongly, and they will look to build on an encouraging performance when Southend United visit on Tuesday.

## Blues 0 Southend United 4

**A decent performance from Blues couldn't prevent a full Southend first team leaving the ProKit UK Stadium with a 4-0 win on Tuesday evening.**

The Shrimpers scored twice in each half, with their final two goals coming late in the game, to wrap up a comfortable victory but there was plenty for Blues' boss Kevin Watson to be upbeat about after a good display from his team.

Watson's side could have taken a fifth minute lead when Calvin Ekpiteta teed up Darren

Foxley for a shot only to see Saturday's scorer against West Ham hit his low strike is wide  
But Simon Cox opened the scoring for the visitors seven minutes later after he was picked out by a first-time cross from Jermaine McGlashan on the right to volley home off the underside of the crossbar.

Blues went close to levelling in the 19th minute when Calvin Ekpiteta skied a shot for the Blues after promising wing play from Christian Owusu and Foxley

The Shrimpers extended their lead midway through the half as Michael Kightly finished off a flowing move to score his first goal back in a Southend shirt as Dru Yearwood played the ball through for Kightly to find the bottom corner with his left foot.

Phil Brown's side were unfortunate not to extend their lead further before the break thanks to a string of top-drawer saves from Harry Voss as he brilliantly got down to a Yearwood strike that was tipped around the post, before stopping Cox's goal-bound scissors-kick and Kightly's diving-header in quick succession.

Blues started the second half strongly with Calvin Ekpiteta and Foxley having good efforts before George Casey went agonisingly close to pulled a goal back early in the second half as his free-kick from wide left was parried onto the face of a post by Ted Smith.

Southend struck the woodwork minutes later as Kightly teed up Stephen Hendrie, only for the full-back to strike the outside of a post.

Southend though did extend their lead in the 68th minute as McGlashan and Cox combined again with the latter firing home to make it 3-0  
McGlashan used his pace to ghost beyond the Stortford full-back, Williams Danquaa, crossing low for Cox to smash home from close range on the half-volley.

Phil Brown's side then rounded off the scoring in the 83rd minute as Nico Cotton hit a low strike beyond Voss, off the inside the of a post.

## **Blues 2 Billericay Town 6**

**Four goals in the space of 22 second half minutes continued the visitors' successful**

**start whilst Kevin Watson's Stortford side struggled to impose themselves on the match in the moist conditions.**

Both sides went close before Danny Waldren's free-kick glanced off George Casey for an opening own goal in the 32<sup>nd</sup> minute and Joe Ellul headed in at the back post from Byron Lawrence's corner four minutes before the break.

Two minutes after the restart Matt Tapley reduced the arrears for Stortford with a crisp shot but then Billericay's array of second half substitutes took over. Sam Deering netted their third in the 55<sup>th</sup> minute cutting in from the right and scored again ten minutes later with a fine low effort from the edge of the box. Billy Bricknell fired home a penalty soon afterwards when Ricky Modeste was fouled by Williams Danquaa before Louie Theophanous rattled in a sixth goal in the 77<sup>th</sup> minute after more pressure.

Stortford scored their second with seven minutes left as Calvin Ekpiteta crossed for substitute Ryan Richefond to hit the net.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD: Harry Voss; George Casey (Costa Azzopardi 82); Aaron Tumwa (Williams Danquaa 66); Harry Hickford (Ryan Richefond 46); Kenny Gledhill (Ricky Spriggs 46); Marvel Ekpiteta; Calvin Ekpiteta; Nathan Livings (Jordan Palmer 66); Christian Owusu; Matt Tapley; Darren Foxley. Unused substitute: Jordan King

Att: 204

## **Blues 0 Chelmsford City 1**

**A good display for the Blues wasn't enough to prevent Chelmsford City making it six wins from as many pre-season games at the ProKit (UK) Stadium, on Tuesday.**

Kevin Watson side included on-loan Stevenage forward Dipo Akinyemi, fought out a goal-less first half against National League South Chelmsford City and despite conceding a goal after the break can be satisfied after a very competent performance. Good individual showings, particularly by young midfielder Jordan Westcott, Akinyemi and Calvin Ekpiteta gave much promise for the future.

The Clarets' Chris Dickson had an early shot well saved by Harry Voss. Akinyemi almost broke through the middle and a cross-cum-shot from Aaron Tumwa for Stortford was turned over the bar by City keeper Jake Jessup. Four minutes before the break the visitors' Shaun Batt shot into the side-netting.

Ricky Spriggs cleared off the line a minute after the restart and the only goal of the game came in the 57<sup>th</sup> minute when two substitutes linked with Johnny Giles slipping the ball to Michael West who found the far top corner from the left edge of the area.

Jason Williams missed a sitter for the visitors after 65 minutes and Voss saved well from Kudos Oyenuga but the hosts could well have netted an equaliser before the end with Christian Owusu firing across the six yard box and then Akinyemi having a shot well saved by Jessup late on after great approach work involving Westcott and Ekpiteta.

Blues: Harry Voss; George Casey; Aaron Tumwa (Williams Danquah 46); Jordan Westcott; Hafeez Sanusi (Harry Hickford 63); Ricky Spriggs; Ryan Richefond (Christian Owusu 63); Zak Guerfi (Jack Thomas 83); Dipo Akinyemi (Matt Tapley 88); Calvin Ekpiteta; Darren Foxley.

Substitutes not used: Kenny Gledhill, Costa Azzopardi and Jordan King.

Attendance: 281

### **Thurrock 3 Blues 0**

**Blues' search for a victory continues after they went down 3-0 at Isthmian League side Thurrock, on Tuesday.**

The visitors hit the woodwork on a couple of occasions but three goals in the space of 15 minutes either side of the break condemned them to a fourth straight loss.

Dipo Akinyemi had Blues' only chance during a dull start to the game, but the hosts took the lead on the half hour mark when Dennis Oli beat the offside trap and lobbed Harry Voss.

Mark Hughes went close to levelling within two minutes when he saw a 25-yard volley saved by Mason in the home goal.

Darren Foxley and Calvin Ekpiteta had good chances to equalise before the home side's lead was doubled three minutes before the break when Glenn Poole curled home from 20 yards after a flowing move.

The game was effectively over as a contest just before the hour mark as Charlie Stimson was given an easy chance to tap home after some poor defending.

Blues hit the bar with 14 minutes remaining when Owusu set up Akinyemi, but the on loan Stevenage forward was unlucky from 18 yards

### **Maldon & Tiptree Blues 0**

**Blues wrapped up their pre-season friendlies as they came from behind to draw 1-1 at Maldon & Tiptree, on Saturday.**

In a game where both sides' goals appeared to offside due to the hosts only providing one linesman, Blues hit the woodwork three times for the second successive match.

There was a surprise return in the Stortford goal for Nicky Eyre, but it was the home side who took the lead midway through the first half.

Trialist Jordan Wilson levelled for Blues with 17 minutes remaining, and Stortford will now prepare for next week's Evo-Stik South Premier debut at Tiverton Town.