

Blues 2 Cheshunt 1

Blues had two reasons to celebrate this closely fought Herts Charity Cup success.

They gained revenge on the Ambers for last season's semi-final 2-1 defeat in the competition but more importantly they were able to record their first victory of the campaign which should give them a big boost.

The visitors proved to be strong opponents but after Ricky Spriggs had scrambled in what proved to be the winner seventeen minutes from time Stortford had a few chances to extend their lead before the final whistle.

There were a number of changes in Kevin Watson's side amongst which were a new goalkeeper in the form of Tyler McCarthy and Marvel Ekpiteta slotted into the right back berth for his first competitive match of the season.

It was the Bostik Division One North side that made the early running. After three minutes skipper Jason Hallett lifted the ball over the bar when well placed and then soon afterwards Johnny Ashman cracked a shot towards goal from 25 yards that cannoned off McCarthy's crossbar.

The new stopper then held on to a free-kick by Gary Jones at the second attempt. The Blues in the early stages had some promising moves towards goal without really threatening. However, that all changed ten minutes before the break as Marvel Ekpiteta made a great run down the right before crossing into the middle where his cousin Calvin Ekpiteta beat James May in the Cheshunt goal with a firmly hit shot from 12 yards,



A spell of Stortford pressure followed but in the closing minutes of the half Mark Summers missed a good chance to level the scores for the visitors when he was clear on goal but shot tamely to McCarthy. Then, shortly afterwards, Hallett saw his effort pushed out by the Blues keeper and Joe Robinson cleared the loose ball close to the goal-line.

Immediately on the restart George Casey was brought on as a substitute for Marvel Ekpiteta who had suffered a head injury in the first half. Cheshunt equalised two minutes after the break with Tom Bruno's corner from the left being met at the far post by a header from unmarked substitute Kyle Roberts

The Blues then had a let-off five minutes later when Summers hit the bar from ten yards after a cross by Ashman. There was then a period of end-to-end play. Midway through the half Jordan Westcott shot over from an angle after good attacking play by Calvin Ekpiteta whilst skipper Mark Hughes was inches wide of the far upright with a header from Casey's free-kick.

At the other end McCarthy made a good stop at his near post to hold an acute angled effort from Roberts but then in the 73rd minute the Blues netted the goal to win the tie. Darren Foxley's corner from right led to a goalmouth scramble and when Mark Hughes' close range shot was only half saved by the stretching keeper May the loose ball was finally poked over the line by Ricky Spriggs from a couple of yards distance

Stortford should then have gone on to win the tie more comfortably. In the 87th minute substitute Jason Williams missed a sitter somehow hitting Casey's cross from the right over the bar at the far post from a yard range and then in added time when Cheshunt stopper May had gone forward for a corner the Blues failed to take advantage when Williams broke quickly and Calvin Ekpiteta eventually shot wide of the mark.

Stortford will now host Hitchin Town in the Semi-Final on a date to be decided whilst the other Semi-Final tie will be between Hemel Hempstead Town and Royston Town.

STORTFORD: Tyler McCarthy; Marvel Ekpiteta (George Casey 46); Aaron Tumwa; Mark Hughes; Ricky Spriggs; Joe Robinson; Calvin Ekpiteta; Zak Guerfi (Ryan Richefond 84); Dipo Akinyemi (Jason Williams 68); Jordan Westcott; Darren Foxley.

Unused substitutes: Christian Owusu and Priestley Farquharson.

CHESHUNT: James May; Joe Clemo; Gary Jones; JJ Da Cruz; Jack Lampe; Luke Illsley; Daniel

Cheema (Kyle Roberts 22); Tom Bruno; Jason Hallett (Cameron Ferguson 90); Mark Summers; Johnny Ashman (Ricky Brennan 77).

Unused substitutes: Dylan Ebengo and Jeremie Agholor

Referee: Mr Joel Mannix

Attendance: 124