

GOSPORT 1 BLUES 3



A brace of Tyrique Hyde-Skerritt goals helped Blues move up to 18th place in the Evo-Stik South Premier table with a comfortable win at Gosport, on Saturday.



Hyde-Skerritt's first on 21 minutes came courtesy of a defensive error, which allowed him the space and time and fire past Watch and into the roof of the net. The visitors promptly made it two as captain Mark Hughes profited from a corner which wasn't properly dealt with leaving Gosport with a lot of work to do.

The contest was effectively settled with a second for Hyde-Skerritt - a beautifully struck shot leaving Lewis Watch with no chance as it curled over the prone keeper and in off the underside of the bar.

Although Iffy Onwuachwu scored a consolation six minutes later Blues comfortably closed the game out to send the home side to the foot of the table.

Blues: T McCarthy, G Casey, A Tumwa, M Hughes, M Ekpiteta, J Robinson, T Hyde-Skeritt, S Hatton, D Akinyemi, J Williams, D Foley. Subs: F Moncur, R Richfond, C Owusu, J Westcott, A Rogers.

Att: 262

HITCHIN TOWN 4, BISHOP'S STORTFORD 2

(BIGFREEBET.com Cup 1st Round)

The Blues first venture into a League Cup competition since the 2008/2009 season didn't last long as after a closely fought tie two goals in the final ten minutes saw the hosts advance to the next round at Top Field. There was a bitter kick in the teeth for Stortford as well with leading

goalscorer Jason Williams red carded at the very end for foul and abusive language to referee Mr Donnellan as the players left the pitch. It means that the striker will be suspended for three games from the next midweek.



Marvel Ekpiteta was unable to take part in the tie due to a hip injury so Alex Rogers came into Kevin Watson's side in the defence and Williams wasn't in the starting eleven as he was feeling unwell but took a place on the bench.

Stortford began well and were ahead in the 6th minute. George Casey sent Dipo Akinyemi away down the right wing and when the latter crossed CHRISTIAN OWUSU gained control of the ball just inside the box and his shot on the turn found the corner of the net (0-1). It was Owusu's first goal for the Blues.

Charlie Smith was close following a corner for the Canaries but Sam Hatton nearly extended the Blues lead in the 18th minute with a 25 yard free-kick after Owusu had been fouled by Kavan Cotter. It was a blow for Stortford five minutes later when loan player Tyrique Hyde-Skerritt had to be substituted after sustaining an ankle injury.

However, Stortford still had the edge on proceedings and Akinyemi shot just off target after working himself into a good position. Successive corners around the half-hour mark led to the home goal leading a charmed life as firstly a Darren Foxley flag-kick on the right caused problems and then a Sam Hatton corner from the opposite side flashed across the six yard box with skipper Mark Hughes almost getting a touch into the net. A thunderous 20 yard rising drive from Casey that keeper Michael Johnson finger-tipped over

culminated more pressure from Stortford six minutes before the break.

However, the Canaries levelled in the 42nd minute. A deep cross from the right by Kieran McCaffrey into the box resulted in ELLIOT BAILEY's glancing header finding the far corner past Tyler McCarthy (1-1). The Blues' keeper then had to produce an excellent save when diving full length to keep out a Kavan Cotter free-kick. Then just before the interval Charlie Smith shot too close to McCarthy from a good position.

Half time: 1-1

There was plenty of goal action within minutes of the restart. In the 47th minute Stortford's defence was caught out when ELLIOT BAILEY fastened on to a through ball and ran on clear to shoot low past the oncoming McCarthy (2-1). But Stortford were soon back to equalise two minutes later. Foxley was fouled on the left side of the pitch and when Hatton swung his free-kick over to the far upright DIPO AKINYEMI was there to head in from close range (2-2).

The action switched from end to end for a period with Owusu pulling his shot across the goal and past the far post in the 65th minute and, at the other end, Bailey's shot was kept out by McCarthy's legs at the near post five minutes later. The hosts' winger Tremayne Charles was increasingly causing Stortford's left flank problems and he went close shortly afterwards. Darren Foxley had an effort from the left deflected away for a corner whilst Akinyemi saw his angled shot blocked away by stopper Michael Johnson's legs.

Charles' influence on the tie was again shown when he crossed in from the right and Bailey was close with a shot past the far post.

With ten minutes left Kevin Watson brought on Jason Williams to replace Christian Owusu but a

minute later the Canaries re-took the lead that this time they didn't relinquish. Hitchin had for some time begun to dominate the midfield and look the more likely side to win the tie. A fine pass up the right from McCaffrey released CONNOR VINCENT to cut in towards goal and blast the ball past McCarthy (3-2).

Not long afterwards Charles missed a chance when Cotter had crossed into the box and Vincent had teed the ball up for the shot. In a late raid George Casey almost grabbed an equaliser when his low drive flew past the far post and then the home side went down the other end to score their fourth goal. Charles crossed from the right and ELLIOT BAILEY completed his hat-trick by netting from point blank range (4-2).

It was deep into added time that Jason Williams was yellow carded for blocking an attempted clearance by keeper Johnson. The striker protested strongly and then was shown a red card by the match official seconds later when the players walked off the pitch at the final whistle.

STORTFORD: Tyler McCarthy; George Casey; Aaron Tumwa; Mark Hughes; Joe Robinson; Alex Rogers; Tyrique Hyde-Skerritt (Ryan Richefond 23); Sam Hatton; Dipo Akinyemi; Christian Owusu (Jason Williams 80); Darren Foxley.

Unused substitutes: Jordan Westcott and Jack Thomas.

HITCHIN TOWN: Michael Johnson; Kavan Cotter; Toby Syme; Jay Dowie; Dan Webb; Josh Bickerstaff; Kieran McCaffrey; Charlie Smith; Connor Vincent (Jack Green 86); Elliot Bailey; Tremayne Charles.

Unused substitutes: Jonny McNamara, Lucas Kirkpatrick, Ben Walster and Lewis Rolfe.

Referee: Mr T Donnellan

Attendance: 138