

LEWES 2 BISHOP'S STORTFORD 0

Blues' poor run of results in the FA Trophy since reaching the semi-final stage in the 2004/05 season continued as they were knocked out of the competition by the Rooks at the Dripping Pan.

It was easy to see why the hosts were heading the Bostik Division 1 South League with their strong running and pacy forwards up front. However, after their opponents had taken an early lead, Stortford settled and certainly for most of the second half had most of the possession and by the final whistle were unlucky not to have reduced Lewes' two goal winning margin.

Stortford also suffered from an erratic display from referee Craig Green who, towards the end of the first period, rejected appeals for an obvious penalty when the home side's Bouwe Bosma pushed over George Casey in the box. It was a yellow card offence and considering the Lewes player had been shown a yellow card for a foul on Marvel Ekpiteta only two minutes previously the Sussex side were also fortunate to still have eleven men on the pitch.

Other decisions from the match official in the second period also seemed to go against Kevin Watson's team.

Stortford's starting line-up included the newly signed Josh Simpson and Aaron Tumwa returning from injury. Jason Williams was again missing due to suspension.

The dangerous Ronnie Conlan struck a shot over the bar from the edge of the box

in the first minute after Casey didn't control a cross and then, as the home side had the early upper-hand, Matthew Hurley was narrowly over after the ball fell loose following a James Hammond free-kick.

It was Conlon who was instrumental in the first goal in the 12th minute. His run down the left finished with a cross that CHARLIE COPPOLA dispatched high into the net with a first-time left footed shot from just inside the area.

Another run by Conlon five minutes later resulted in Tyler McCarthy producing a diving save to divert Conlon's effort for a corner.



The Blues keeper held a shot from striker Billy Medlock at his near post but Stortford were working their way back into the match before being denied a definite spot-kick by Mr Green. Then, six minutes before the break, Dipo Akinyemi crossed from the left and Freddy Moncur couldn't quite scramble the ball past the Rooks' stopper Chris Winterton and just before half-time Josh Simpson hit a deflected effort from the edge of the box not far over the target following a lay-back from Moncur and good work by Akinyemi. Half time: 1-0

The Blues started the second period on the front-foot and following an early

throw on the right in towards the near post by Akinyemi, Marvel Ekpiteta's shot was pushed away at full stretch by Winterton.

A Medlock shot on the turn was narrowly wide in the 49th minute but Moncur had the ball in the net for Stortford shortly afterwards but the goal was disallowed as the referee ruled that Winterton had been obstructed. Joe Robinson then headed the ball straight at the Lewes keeper when he should have done better after the home defence failed to clear an Akinyemi long throw.



There was a period of end-to-end action with home substitute Frankie Chappell volleying over and Moncur driving just wide after an incisive attack. However, Lewes doubled their lead in the 62nd minute. Conlon and MEDLOCK were involved in a spell of inter-passing that cut through the centre of the Blues defence and the latter netted with a curling shot over the top of McCarthy was just inside the box .

Stortford kept plugging away and a 25 yard drive from Akinyemi was inches wide in the 66th minute whilst a Moncur shot was blocked away for a corner. The luck wasn't going the Blues way and ten minutes from time Lewes central defender Lloyd Cotton screwed a Darren Foxley cross from the left past the face of his own goal.



Substitute Callum Taylor was lively when he came on to replace Christian Owusu and he almost scored in the first minute of added time with his under-hit shot from beyond the far upright being kicked off the line by keeper Winterton.

The final action of the tie saw Conlon force a good save from McCarthy.



STORTFORD: Tyler McCarthy; George Casey; Aaron Tumwa; Josh Simpson; Marvel Ekpiteta; Joe Robinson; Freddy Moncur; Jordan Westcott; Christian Owusu (Callum Taylor 63); Dipo Akinyemi; Darren Foxley .

Unused substitutes: Ryan Richefond, Jack Thomas and Marcus Crowther.

LEWES: Chris Winterton; Steve Brinkhurst; Matthew George; James Hammond; Lloyd Cotton; Matthew Hurley; Bouwe Bosma (Wilfried Grimaud 76); Gus Sow (Frankie Chappell 54); Billy Medlock (Jonte Smith 80); Ronnie Conlon; Charlie Coppola.

Unused substitutes: George McCarthy and Ross Barclay.

Referee: Mr Craig Green

Attendance: 568