

SPORT

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City shock Stones in unexpected setback

WEALDSTONE received a big wake-up call on Monday as they fell to a surprising 3-0 defeat at mid-table Oxford City.

A dominant and enterprising first period for the Stones made the defeat more puzzling and frustrating but once they conceded via the home side's best player, Kabongo Tshimanga, with 20 minutes to go they alarmingly fell apart, giving away two late penalties both converted by Matt Paterson.

Stones had Connor Stevens back in their starting line-up with Matt Lench taking up a midfield berth, the 3G surface dictating selection to a degree. The surface undoubtedly took time to get used to with the heavily rubberised pitch more akin to a dry sandpit throwing up dust at every bounce.

Following Saturday's 1-1 draw at home to Concord Rangers when Danny Green's goal was cancelled out before half-time, the visitors started very brightly and could have nicked a goal even after one minute's play but Bradley Hudson-Odoi's touch was too heavy after good work from Godfrey Poku.

City set an early pattern of looking threatening down the right flank on the break with Tshimanga a real handful for the visitors.

David Pratt went close on 12 minutes when he chased down a poor

By Anthony Matthews

pass and should have netted but Craig King stopped well to avert embarrassment. Lench then took a punt from fully 30 yards but his effort dipped over.

City pressed hard all over the pitch and Stones midfield were being hurried and to some degree this stifled their overly measured passing game through the middle.

Both sides had good possession but again Stones went closest to opening the scoring when Hudson-Odoi's powerful strike was pushed away by King at the near post.

Green almost found the net on the half-hour mark with a spectacular effort on the turn from distance but the ball smashed off the bar. Pratt went even closer with another effort that King saved for what would later create a clean sheet platform to win the contest for his side.

City looked the more likely after the break but Stones remained comfortable enough in defence, even though Eddie Jones had a decent effort but was wide of the mark.

The match became something of a war of attrition reminding those on the pitch, and off it, that all games at this level, irrespective of early league positions, are a big battle from start to finish.



Joe White was unable to capitalise on this opportunity for Stones on Monday. Picture: DAN FINILL/DFINILL PHOTOGRAPHY

Pratt had yet another half chance, but the home side defended strongly and gradually began to assume some real control.

The turning point came when Bobby Wilkinson rolled the dice around the 60th minute and threw on all three substitutes to shake things up in an effort to win the game.

This tactic has often worked to excellent effect in the past but on this occasion the changes seemed to disrupt Stones and strengthen the away side's hand. Quite why was a

mystery but suddenly the away side looked very flat.

Former Boston United striker Tshimanga finally got his chance on 70 minutes. He danced around three defenders and lashed past Jonathan North to break the deadlock.

Stones had no answers and City pressed forward to ram home their advantage. Two late penalties were conceded under pressure, the first by Freddie Grant and soon after by Rhys Tyler, who barged his man off the ball for a clear spot-kick.

Productive three days for Borough

HARROW FOLLOW UP TIVERTON DRAW WITH HENDON TRIUMPH ON MONDAY

HARROW Borough registered an impressive haul of four points from a possible six over the Bank Holiday weekend, winning 4-2 at Hendon to follow up a 2-2 draw at home to Tiverton Town in the Southern League.

Goals from Anthony O'Connor, Frank Keita, Lewis Cole and Harry Rush secured an emphatic victory for Steve Baker's side, erasing the memory of their 6-0 thrashing at the hands of Hendon in the corresponding fixture last season.

That win followed a 2-2 draw at Earlsmead with Tiverton, although Borough will be kicking themselves for not seeing the game out following a late leveller from their Devon visitors.

It was Tiverton who snatched the lead after 11 minutes when Levi Landricombe beat Hafeed Al-Droubi in the Harrow net.

The hosts' dominance was eventually rewarded on the hour when O'Connor latched on to Cole's long ball to level proceedings.

Harrow turned the game around with 12 minutes remaining when George Moore struck from Cole's cut-back, but Nick Hurst snatched a point for Tiverton with virtually the last kick of the game to leave Borough in 10th in the Southern League Premier Division South.

Borough will be hoping to follow up Monday's win with three more points at home to Salisbury on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Harrow will travel to AFC Hornchurch on Saturday, September 8 in the FA Cup First Qualifying Round.

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