

SPORT

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Stones left to rue missed chances after City thriller

IT was a case of what might have been for Wealdstone after a second half of high drama and heart-stopping entertainment ultimately saw them come up just short in a 3-2 defeat to Chelmsford City at Grosvenor Vale on Saturday.

Bobby Wilkinson's side almost came back from the dead and could well have won the game when they had Chelmsford on the ropes after battling back from 3-0 down, but Danny Green's penalty was saved by Nathan McDonald – a spot-kick that would have brought the home side an equaliser on 69 minutes.

But the massively under pressure City somehow held out for the three points with a combination of luck and, for the home fans, gut wrenchingly poor finishing from their side.

The first taste of what was to follow for the hosts arrived on 14 minutes when David Pratt's headed goal was ruled out for offside. Rhys Tyler, who was a threat to City all afternoon, shot wide soon after as Stones probed for openings.

Just when Stones seemed to be gaining a real foothold in the contest, the away side took the lead with a spectacular strike from Michael Spillane. The big defender astutely spotted Jonathan North off his line and lofted the ball over him from fully 50 yards.

This knocked the stuffing out of Stones and they never really recovered in the first period, falling further behind 10 minutes later when Rhys Murphy powered a header past North from a fine Matthew Young cross.

Stones needed a spark of inspiration to breath some life back into their game but within four minutes of the restart they conceded a third goal from a Tommy Wraight strike and looked down and out at 3-0.

But within two minutes Wilkinson's men had pulled a goal back when Max Porter bounced the ball into his own net from a goalmouth scramble.

Suddenly, Wealdstone awoke from their slumbers and with nothing more to lose went on all-out attack. Green fired over when well placed from another Tyler cross but the catalyst for their revival came when substitute Stefan Brown came on.

It was then the charge of the light brigade as Stones carved out chance after chance, none more so than when Bradley Hudson-Odoi mis-cued in front of goal after a great turn by Bradley Bubb.

Brown then chased down a lost cause and McDonald sliced his clearance out before the same player almost doubled his tally with a close effort.



Stones see this opportunity cleared off the line.

Picture: DAN FINILL/DFINILL PHOTOGRAPHY

Brown finally got the reward for his efforts and seized on a great pass and netted with aplomb on 68 minutes.

The pressure continued to intensify and it finally told when a handball in the City area gave Stones the chance they needed to level the scores.

The normally very reliable Green hit the penalty low and hard but somehow McDonald pushed the ball out for a corner.

And from that set piece a powerful goal-bound header from Connor Stevens was incredibly hacked away with Stones players protesting it was over the line.

But still the chances came and went for the home side. Bubb was put clean through with time and space but somehow struck the upright, and then missed another opportunity at the death from a long throw from substitute Matt Lench that caused havoc in the defence.

Hard work made of cup progress

HARROW Borough started like an express train but were ultimately somewhat fortunate to reach the second round of the London Senior Cup on Tuesday night following a 3-2 victory over Hendon.

Steve Baker's side appeared to be cruising through after racing into a 3-0 lead after 11 minutes, but they then allowed their opponents back into the tie.

Both sides made a host of changes; Harrow had five in the side who'd started Saturday's 1-0 home loss to Gosport Borough while the Greens made 10 changes from their 1-0 victory over Poole Town.

Borough came flying out of the blocks and struck first after five minutes when Anthony O'Connor netted after Adam Richards had headed down a corner.

The advantage was doubled five minutes later as Daylan Kearney fired home against his former employers after being played in by Harry Rush.

Having scored one, it took only a minute for Kearney to double his tally from 20 yards following a poor pass out of defence.

However, Harrow then seemed to rest on their laurels and after a couple of warning signs, Hendon pulled one back after 21 minutes through Shaquille Hippolyte-Patrick's downward header.

Borough's lethargy increased after the break and they were left facing an awkward end to the tie when keeper Hafeed Al-Droubi mis-kicked after coming out of his area, giving Michael White a simple task with 10 minutes remaining, but Harrow were able to hold on.

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