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Derby delight after a dramatic draw sees Stones rise to second

By Anthony Matthews

JAMIE Leacock hailed an "absolutely massive" victory for Wealdstone as they moved up to second in the National League South table with a 1-0 victory at Hemel Hempstead Town on Tuesday night.

David Pratt scored the decisive goal in the 33rd minute as Stones built on Saturday's dramatic 3-3 draw at home to Bath City to move two points behind leaders Billericay Town.

Delighted Stones assistant manager Leacock said: "In terms of the points it's absolutely massive. Getting that point over the weekend and three tonight is absolutely huge. For the boys psychologically it gives them massive confidence."

"We changed the shape tonight and we started the game really well. Right from the warm-up the manager made it clear we were going to come out the blocks tonight, so just credit to the boys, they were brilliant, absolutely superb tonight."

After the Stones had dealt with a couple of early corners, Hemel had the first chance when Rob Sinclair met a cross from the left but his shot was blocked by Joe Payne.

The visitors responded with Danny Green firing narrowly wide, but their start to the contest was more controlled and professional than on Saturday.

Both sides continued to have sights of goal, with Wealdstone's shape crucial in preventing their hosts from getting in behind.

Green drove another effort narrowly wide of the near post, while Scott Shulton fired over for Hemel before what proved to be the match-winning moment arrived.

A short corner was swung in by Rhys Tyler and Pratt was first to rise, flicking his header across Laurie Walker into the far corner.

Although Hemel responded quickly, with a header cleared off the line by Green, the visitors took their lead into the break.

Wealdstone were pressing the home side into mistakes and their game plan continued to work well after the break, with a number of dangerous crosses put into the opposition penalty area as Green proved to be their biggest asset going forward.

Hemel were unable to show any real urgency until the latter stages with their best chance of the evening arriving in the first minute of injury time.

Tom Knowles provided the delivery and Sinclair fired goalwards, but Jonathan North pulled off a superb save down to his left and the ball was scrambled clear as Stones secured a big derby success.

Saturday had seen Stones salvage a point at the death through Elliot Charles after the home side had fallen 2-0 behind in the opening 12 minutes.

An Anthony Straker own goal gave Stones hope after 73 minutes and substitute Charles looked to have salvaged a draw with five minutes remaining, only for Bath to retake the lead as Ross Stearn completed his hat-trick.



Elliot Charles makes it 2-2 from the penalty spot in Saturday's dramatic draw with Bath City.

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