Match Report: AFC Bridgnorth 1-1 Worcester Raiders

26 September 2020

@chaguejones

Andy Hartlebury earns AFC a point with a late equaliser against Worcester Raiders.

The Meadowmen rescue a point in the dying embers of their opening West Midland Regional League fixture, courtesy of an Andy Hartlebury header.

The hosts started the game brightly and had the better of play within the opening 10 minutes of the first whistle. They looked threatening on the break and kept the visitors on the back foot, Cam Milne testing his range for the first real attempt on goal of the game. However, he missed just wide of the Raiders far post.

Chris Crook was enjoying a relatively quiet game in the sticks thanks to a resolute home defence. However, AFC’s shot-stopper was called into action just after the 20-minute mark. Dylan Hart broke through the Bridgnorth defence, but Crook was well placed to comfortably save the driven shot.

The deadlock was broken on the 26th minute mark. A piece of exciting play on the edge of the area released Raider’s Kyle Belmonte, who smashed the ball into the roof of the net.

Bridgnorth tried to get straight back into the game, moments into the second half but found themselves instantly on the back foot as Raiders came out the blocks to add to their opener to put them a goal to the good.

The ball was in the Bridgnorth goal but to no avail as play was pulled back for a foul on defender Kevin Buxton. Raiders had another match winning chance moments later as their forward wriggled his way through Harry Walker’s challenge and pulled the trigger, only to be let down by an ever so solid Andy Hartlebury on the line for the home side.

Manager Graham Ward has endlessly praised the togetherness and character in the AFC Bridgnorth dressing room and it came to fruition when Andy Hartlebury rose highest in the area from a 90th minute corner and his header looped into the visitors net, sending them back to Worcester, heartbroken.

Man of the match- Karl Griffiths (AFC Bridgnorth)

The teams:

AFC Bridgnorth- Chris Crook, Kevin Buxton, Harry Walker, Andy Hartlebury, Aaron Weston, Cam Milne (Lee 78’), Jase Pike ©, Myles Arnold (Walton 60’), Karl Griffiths, Oliver Waddison (Strevens 78’), Charlie Knowles

Subs- Elliott Lee, Dominic Strevens, Jake Walton

Subs not used- Josh Smith, Nathan Derrick