



Saturday 8th August 2009 Southend United 2-2 Huddersfield Town

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Matt Heath, Adam Barrett, John White, Franck Moussa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Alan McCormack, Anthony Grant, Lee Barnard and Francis Laurent.**

Southend United started their League One season with a respectable draw against one of the much-fancied teams for promotion. However, they may feel a little disappointed after letting a two-goal lead slip.

Before the game there was applause for Peter Clarke as he came out to warm up with his new team, he replied with applause to every side of the ground, which was nice to see.

That soon went out of the window once the game got underway, after a minute's applause for maybe one of the greatest gentlemen in the game, Sir Bobby Robson.

Southend looked lively as they were knocking the ball around with confidence, but disaster soon hit the Blues, when Francis Laurent who was very impressive in pre-season got stretchered off with a nasty looking injury, fortunately scans have shown there was not a fracture. He was replaced by James Walker who was making his first appearance in the League since the 2-0 reverse at Leeds in January.

It was Southend who got off the mark first when Anthony Grant was tripped in the box. The penalty was duly dispatched by Lee Barnard, who kept up his impressive record against Huddersfield Town. That makes it an impressive 21 goals in 42 starts in his Blues career.

Southend continued to look at ease in the first half and they were out of the blocks quickly in the second as they looked to continue their dominance against the big-spenders.

It was soon 2-0 when Franck Moussa slid home below goalkeeper Smithies in the 56th minute after good pressure from James Walker and an inch-perfect through ball from Alan McCormack.

Southend were cruising but in the 71st minute former Stockport winger Anthony Pilkington smashed home a volley to give the travelling faithful something to cheer about.

The Shrimpers came back and the hard working Walker produced a few step-overs before curling a beautiful cross into the box only to see Alan McCormack glance his header onto the bar. That proved costly for the Blues and in the 79th minute young striker Jordan Rhodes, who came off the bench, headed home from close range when maybe the goalkeeper could have come to collect the ball.

The Blue Army nearly clinched all three points that their play deserved in the dying moments. After Michael Collins got sent off for throwing the ball at Simon Francis, Franck Moussa saw his close range strike blocked on the line.

Overall a very positive start from the boys and if they keep this form up throughout the season, who knows?