



Saturday 17th October 2009
Southend United 2-1 Bristol Rovers

Blues XI: **Steve Mildenhall, Simon Francis, Adam Barrett, Anthony Grant, George Friend, Franck Moussa, Jean-Francois Christophe, Alan McCormack, Francis Laurent, Lee Barnard and Dougie Freedman.**

Southend United returned to winning ways against Bristol Rovers thanks to a brace from leading scorer Lee Barnard at Roots Hall. The striker netted his 11th and 12th goals of the campaign, which took him top of the League One scoring charts.

Despite losing 4 of their last 5 games Southend United started brightly and nearly took the lead when young Belgian winger Franck Moussa saw his shot fly past the post early on in the match. That was only the real chance until the 14th minute when the hosts took the lead.

Dougie Freedman raced onto the ball on the halfway line and ran at the Rovers defence before playing a lovely back-heel into the path of striker Lee Barnard who curled a superb strike past former Blues trialist Mikkel Andersen into the bottom corner.

Bristol Rovers were playing some lovely football, when on the ball, and all Southend fans had their hearts in their mouths when former MK Dons and Brighton winger Mark Wright saw his long range shot deflect off the head of Adam Barrett and narrowly over Mildenhall's cross bar.

Dougie Freedman, who looks for the moment like his injuries are behind him, got in on the act but saw his right-footed effort flash past the post after neat build up play.

Charlton loanee Chris Dickson saw his effort well saved by Steve Mildenhall in what proved to be the last main action of the first half.

The Blues, who really should have doubled their lead in the first half, soon did thanks to Barnard's twelfth strike of the season. Simon Francis clipped a lovely ball over the top for McCormack to run onto, and the Irish midfielder let the ball go over his shoulder before drilling a cross over for Lee Barnard to tap home from 6 yards. The Shrimpers were well on top and deserved their lead.

The Gas were getting back into the game and Dickson had two glorious chances to score but he put one wide and another one over as the visitors upped the pressure on the Southend goal.

Rovers did get themselves on the score sheet after Anthony Grant put through his own net. Winger Mark Wright ran at George Friend before curling a low cross into the box that Grant, who was having a decent game, poked past Mildenhall under pressure from the Bristol forwards. Game on. Still the visitors were coming forward and Mildenhall did well once again to block smartly from Dickson however down the other end Barnard went close to scoring his second hat-trick of the season when his 15 yard curling effort bent around the post.

Moussa also went close for the Shrimpers, as did McCormack, who still hasn't found his shooting boots this season, when he blazed over from the edge of the box after great work from Lee Sawyer.

The game ended 2-1 to Southend as they secure only their 2nd win at Roots Hall this season ahead of a long trip to Carlisle next week.