

**ST. NEOTS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
MATCH REPORT – SATURDAY MARCH 30th 2002**

EAGLE BITTER UNITED COUNTIES PREMIER LEAGUE

BOSTON TOWN 0 - ST. NEOTS TOWN 1

This game had plenty of controversial moments but the football side was a little wanting as Saints seemed to be dragged down to a level not usually associated with a Boston Town team. The Poachers looked a pale reflection of the side that lifted the title last season, which according to the programme notes is due to a combination of injury and lack of resources available to the manager to strengthen his first team squad.

After two good performances against Ford Sports and Stotfold the Saints lads were in good spirit and started the game with an air of confidence although the very hard and bumpy pitch made control of the ball very difficult. Steve Kuhne was denied, in the first few minutes, when Mick Brown, the Boston keeper, palmed his header, from an Andy Chapman free kick, round the post. Goal line clearances denied Paul Bloss, Wes Byrne and Steve Kuhne while Boston were limited the occasional break a way in which Jamie Graham always looked capable of scoring against the run of play.

On 27 minutes Dean Elston tripped Wes Byrne, in the box, and the referee had no hesitation in pointing to the spot. Steve Kuhne took the spot kick, which he directed in the right corner, but Mick Brown the agile Boston keeper, made a good save pushing the kick round the post for a corner.

The last few minutes of the first half was full of incident as the Referee sent two Boston players off in as many minutes. First to go was Paul Langford for a head butt on Simon Claridge and then Liam Harrold for two cautions. In time added on to the first half Saints finally broke the deadlock with a well-placed header from Wes Byrne. Paul Bloss took a short free kick to Jason Meeds, just on the corner of the Boston penalty area, Meeds floated in a cross to the back post and Byrne out jumped the defence to head home.

During the second period Saints could not make the two-man advantage pay dividends although the nine man Boston team worked tirelessly to avoid a possible rout. Dean Elston and Lee Rippin were outstanding at the back for Boston and Jamie Graham always looked capable of getting away from the Saints defenders.

Warren Brown replaced Ricky Dear, half way through the second period, and began to bring some urgency into the Saints side although Boston still probably edged the number of good chances created. From a St. Neots point of view a win at Boston is always an achievement and with the other results in the league going in our favour a top three finish is still a possibility.

Team: Young, Grieve, Bloss, Chapman, Smith, Buckland, Dear, Meeds, Kuhne, Byrne, Claridge.

Subs: Hicks, Brown.

Subs Used: Brown for Dear, Hicks for Smith.

Goals: Saints: Byrne (45 mins)