

**ST. NEOTS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB**  
MATCH REPORT – SATURDAY NOVEMBER 9th 2002

**F.A. VASE ROUND TWO**  
**ST NEOTS TOWN 0      NEWCASTLE TOWN      3**

This was St Neots worst performance of the season in front of their own fans and it came in their most important game of the season. After five league defeats in the opening third of the season any UCL honours look unlikely so a good run in the FA Vase would have been some compensation. However Chris Howell's team selection was hampered by an ever-increasing injury list, which included a very dejected Paul Bloss missing his first start for St. Neots in more than two years as he nursed a hamstring strain. Recent signing Julian Olds could only watch as he is cup tied and the size of the injury problem was indicated when midfielder Warren Brown was slotted in as an emergency sweeper. Matters deteriorated further when Trevor Smith was led off with double vision in the first half but the depleted team was only part of the problem. The team just did not perform on the day and although there were some strange decisions by one Assistant Referee the Staffordshire visitors had the most comfortable of passages through to the third round with their goalkeeper not having to make a single save throughout the game.

In a strangely low key first half St Neots managed just one shot on goal and that from Nick Finney, meantime, Steve Young in the St Neots goal made three good saves and just as the teams looked to be going to their break goalless the visitors twice struck in time added on for Smith's injury. Mick Lennon fed Andy Bott and his deliberate chip over Young rebounded from the bar but Bott was not to be denied and two minutes later he capitalised on a bad error by Justin Hicks to put the visitors in front. The second half was just 87 seconds old and as the majority of the crowd made their way back from the bar Bott scored his second goal with a close range volley past Young as St Neots defenders stood and watched.

Almost inevitably frustration set into the St Neots side and both Nick Finney and Warren Brown were cautioned. Then fourteen minutes from time Ian Banks set up Paul Harris for a third goal and the final whistle could not come soon enough for a St Neots side who must now work hard to regain their composure and confidence.