

ST. NEOTS TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB
MATCH REPORT – SATURDAY AUGUST 31st 2002

FA CUP PRELIMINARY ROUND

ST NEOTS TOWN 6 STANSTED 0

When St Neots Manager Chris Howell returned from his holiday earlier this week he will have been delighted to hear that his side had crushed visiting Stansted in the FA Cup to net the Club an away day at Hemel Hempstead in the next round. However he will be far less pleased to hear that his side picked up three more cautions and two of those were for unnecessary dissent shown to a referee who was determined to show that he was in charge.

Altogether there were nine cautions and two sendings-off as well as the visiting Manager being banished from his dug-out. St Neots looked almost embarrassed to be playing against nine men for the last 15 minutes and the game is destined to be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

Nick **Finney** seemed to be harshly treated when he was booked after just four minutes colliding with the goalkeeper in what looked a 50-50 challenge. However four minutes later he put St Neots in front when a long throw by Simon Claridge dropped invitingly at his feet and he volleyed home from ten yards. After 22 minutes it was 2-0 when Samuel Ladega made a hash of a clearance and Paul **Bloss** slotted the ball under the diving goalkeeper.

Once again Nick Finney was the Saints live wire and he twice shot wide with the visitors seldom bothering Steve Young. On the stroke of half time Dale Welch mistimed his jump and handled a Paul Bloss corner and from the resultant penalty kick Steve **Kuhne** netted following up when Paul Dennis parried his first shot.

After the break St Neots became sloppy and Kuhne managed to shoot over an empty net from five yards although the assistant referee had already flagged offside. Skipper Steve Young produced two important saves to maintain his third clean sheet of the season but when defender Graham Bennett was sent off for elbowing Nick Finney another penalty was awarded and this time **Kuhne** made no mistake. Tony Mercer then became the second Stansted player to see red after twice showing dissent to incidents in which he was not involved in a six minutes spell! It all got a bit meaningless as the visitors awaited the final whistle and St Neots added two late goals. **Kuhne** completed his first hat trick of the season rounding the keeper before tapping in. After great work by Claridge however the best goal of the match was saved until the last minute, scored by substitute Wes Byrne after a fine build up that saw Richard Beckett curl his through ball inside the defender to Steve Kuhne, his cross being volleyed in to wrap up a good afternoons display.

SAINTS: S.Young, M.McDonnell, (J.Hicks 82) P.Bloss, T.Smith, N.Buckland, G.Watts, N.Worker, (R.Beckett 80) G.Grant, S.Kuhne, N.Finney, (W.Byrne 76) S.Claridge.

Goalscorers: S.Kuhne 45, 76(pen)89 N.Finney 8, P.Bloss 22, W.Byrne 90.