

## **F.A. Vase Round Two**

St Neots 3 Potters Bar Town 2

Forget the star players who defected to Arlesey with former Manager Jon Taylor. This was the day that the real loyal backbone players of the club rolled up their sleeves and played with pride and passion to record one of the most famous victories in the long 125 years history of the Club. Trailing 0-2 to an in form visiting Potters Bar side with only just over twenty minutes left they came back to score three times to claim their place in round three and deservedly claim the £1000 prize money and move into the last 64 of the competition. Some of the spectators had turned up to hear the last rites read for there was only one new signing in the starting line up but never at any time did the visiting side look like dominating the game despite scoring twice in a nine minutes spell either side of half time. The visitors began well enough with Matt Finlay doing well to parry a fierce first minute shot from Neil Jordan but St Neots quickly got into their stride with Ronnie Fortune forcing a desperate hacked away clearance after a visiting defender had sold his goalkeeper short. Then from a Fortune free kick skipper Damian Matthews rose above everyone else to glance a header agonisingly wide of the far post. Finlay turned a cross from Bradley Poole over the bar on 26 minutes but that was only his second serious save of the game and when Potters Bar did go ahead two minutes before half time the goal was totally against the run of play. It came from an innocuous cross from Poole that skimmed off the head of a defender and fell invitingly at the feet of Richie Howard who finished clinically with a low shot.

St Neots could have been level with their first attack after the break but Barry Dellar's close range volley from a searching Fortune cross was deflected over the bar by a hapless defender. However after 52 minutes another goal by the visitors came from nothing when the impressive and speedy Kieran Woodward skipped down the left and saw his cross-cum-shot deflect in off a post with Finlay looking slow to move. A second blow like this might have killed off lesser teams but this incident really spurred St Neots and they reacted positively sending on newly signed striker Marcus Cumberbatch and taking off a defender. After 67 minutes they were firmly back in the game when the visiting defence failed to clear and Ronnie Fortune saw Chris Fitkin off his line and produced the most delicate of accurate chips to clear the keeper and defender on the goal line to put St Neots back in the game. Ninety seconds later the scores were levelled as Fortune crossed to find the head of Tom Hobbs. His effort beat the keeper and rebounded from the bar and Marcus Cumberbatch netted just twelve minutes into his club debut. From then it was all St Neots who might have scored through Dellar and Fortune but with four minutes left Ryan Jenner invited Barry Dellar to chase a through ball. He went past the keeper but was brought down and a penalty kick awarded. Ronnie Fortune cool as a cucumber stroked home the spot kick and St Neots are into the third round of the Vase for the third time in four seasons.

St Neots: Finley, Kingsbury (Cumberbatch 56m), Lawes, Matthews, Cox, Jelley, Hobbs, Jenner, Dellar, Fortune, Griggs.

Subs not used: Green, Webb, Gatty, Swain.