

St. Neots Town F.C - Match Report 2004/05

Eagle Bitter United Counties League Premier Division

**St Neots 0 Long Buckby 0**

St Neots featured in a second consecutive Rowley Park goalless draw but the contrast could hardly have been more startling. Whereas the midweek game was sterile and pedestrian at times this Saturday offering was packed with end-to-end football and near misses by the barrow load. Out of it as clear man of the match came visiting goalkeeper Warren Courtney who broke the hearts of the home forwards with a string of fine saves. After the game St Neots Manager Kenny Davidson was one of the first to shake his hand in congratulation and that spoke volumes for the match. Buckby came to Rowley Park as the in-form Premier Division side but they were seeking their first victory over the Saints for an incredible fifteen matches and they returned home still not having won at Rowley Park in ten years. However from St Neots perspective it was a point gained rather than two lost for they were without injured front runners Pete Saunders and Danny Griggs and this left them very short up front.

St Neots looked the stronger side at the start with Simon Claridge having a shot blocked on the line by David Cunningham from a Russell Lawes free kick and Tom Hobbs shooting over the bar. Another Lawes free kick set up Clive Woodland but his overhead kick was deflected for a corner. In fact it was the excellent Lawes' free kicks that produced virtually all St Neots first half chances. Midway through the half Buckby had a good spell and might have grabbed the lead. First Jon Crocket volleyed over the bar with the goal at his mercy and then Danny Finlay had a shot deflected over the bar by Nicky Hurst. However the high point of the first half was a reflex save by Courtney to arch backwards to fingertip a net bound shot from Tom Hobbs over the crossbar.

At the end of the half Michael Cox sustained a nasty stud injury on the back of his leg and he did not reappear for the second half with Jason Mannion substituting. Courtney had a very impressive spell early in the second half first making a great save from Claridge who had collected a cross from Cameron Clark. He then saved a certain goal spreading himself to block a shot from Hobbs with his legs whilst at the other end Buckby thought they were denied a penalty when Fazel Coriya went down under a challenge from Steve Corry. However in one St Neots attack just past the hour mark Courtney produced two reflex saves to deny Nicky Hurst and Claridge and at that point he began to look unbeatable. St Neots efforts seemed to flag and Buckby again produced an inspired ten minutes spell in which A John Crocket header from a Darren Harmon corner rattled the crossbar and when the home defence failed to clear David Drinkwater clipped the top of the crossbar with a shot that had beaten Corry. However St Neots were soon back testing the visiting keeper as he pushed away a Cameron Clark header and saved well from Woodland. It was little wonder that both sides tired in the final fifteen minutes and by then both seemed happy to settle for a share of the points. Given the strength of the St Neots line-up this was a performance that can give them confidence for the immediate future.

**St Neots:** Corry, Cox (Mannion 46m), Lawes, Matthews, Hurst, Claridge, Clark, Hobbs, Dellar, Smith, Woodland.

**Subs not used:** Taylor, Bryant, Dance and Cavilla.