

St. Neots Town Football Club
Season 2006-07 Match Reports

SATURDAY 2/9/06
F A CUP PRELIMINARY ROUND
St Neots 2 Brackley Town 2

St Neots confounded expectations by producing their best performance so far this season to draw with higher graded Brackley Town and earn a midweek FA Cup replay. It was a game largely spoiled by the wind but great credit is due to both sets of players for their perseverance in the extreme conditions. St Neots played the first half with wind advantage and it was in this period where all the goals and most of the notable action occurred. The second half proved more sterile with St Neots defending with great determination and they could even have sneaked a win when Gary Walker appeared to be denied a justifiable penalty kick with twelve minutes remaining.

With Lynch pin Jon Hoggett out with a hamstring injury Steve Kuhne chose to move back into defence and bring in Ashley Deverall playing him in a withdrawn midfield role. With five in midfield St Neots looked capable of restricting the Brackley attacking moves but this left Gary Walker as a lone front runner. Regardless of this St Neots had the first two real chances and after Deverall had shot over the bar the hosts took the lead after 12 minutes. Gary Walker set up the move with a shrewd pass inside the final defender and Mark Franklin sprinted through to score with a crisp shot. However the lead lasted just 40 seconds for Brackley hit back when Steve Kuhne misjudged a defensive header and the visitors levelled with a freak goal as a shot from Tom Winters going well wide hit a swirl of wind and curved around the helpless Martin Patching to deflect in off the far post. Brackley seemed buoyed by this and Nicky Hurst had to clear off the line from Robbie Beard and Elliott Sandy brought a sharp save from Patching. On the break visiting keeper Richard Knight saved full length from Gary Walker but nine minutes before the break Brackley crept ahead when Patching pushed a snap shot from Les Hines on to a post and Robbie Beard followed up to tap in the rebound. Back came St Neots and five minutes later equalised with the best goal of the games as Scott Grant delivered a flighted cross to the head of Gary Walker who finished off well to send the sides in all square at the break.

Matt Endersby volleyed over the bar but it was Brackley who had the better of the early part of the second half with Craig Farley going close and substitute Matt Murphy twice testing Patching. With twelve minutes left the hard working Gary Walker burst into the area and looked to be baulked by Martin Brown but the Referee waved away penalty appeals and the remainder of the game saw the visitors on top. Murphy and Farley were both thwarted by saves by Patching and in injury time from a Hines corner Murphy won the ball but headed against the crossbar. St Neots overall performance fully justified their second chance in midweek.

Team: Patching, Grant, Lawes, Dear, Hurst, Deverall, Franklin, Claridge (Jordan 86 mins), Kuhne, Walker (Murray 86 mins), Endersby.

Goals: Franklin (12 mins), Walker (41 mins)

Subs not used: Sommers, Hunt and Fox

Saints man of the match: Ashley Deverall