

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

UCL PREMIER DIVISION
St Neots 1 Yaxley 3

These two sides made nonsense of their positions near the foot of the UCL Premier Division with a keenly combative contest that was only decided late in the second half. A feature of the match was two dreadful defensive errors that gifted either side a goal and St Neots finished with two further injuries that will stretch their very limited resources. However St Neots once again could not be faulted for effort and as their injured and suspended players return to duty their results will improve. Without Ashley Deverall and new signing Wes Byrne – both suspended St Neots had a makeshift attack with Mark Franklin pushed up to partner Sean Murray and they paid the penalty for inexperience whereas experienced Yaxley ‘old boys’ Mark Paul and Ricky Hailstone scored the goals that secured the points.

St Neots got off to the perfect start courtesy of a basic error from Yaxley recent signing Hamish Curtis. The experienced defender stepped on the ball as he attempted to clear and the lively Mark Franklin nipped to direct the ball in off the far post after four minutes. St Neots man of the match Ben Singleton then doubled the lead but his shot was finger tipped to safety by visiting keeper Lea Jordan. Yaxley then began to dominate play and after 18 minutes the speedy Mark Paul was tripped and Martyn Patching did well to turn Hailstone’s free kick for a corner. Three minutes later the scores were levelled when Mark Paul appeared to lose the ball but surrounded by defenders he twisted and turned to fire a low shot past the keeper. St Neots were hampered when Gary Hoy limped off with a recurrence of his injury and he was replaced by Kevin Ashby who slotted in at the heart of the defence with Tom Moran moving to full back. Nicky Hurst should have reinstated St Neots lead but he volleyed a Russell Lawes corner over the bar from a narrow angle and the home side were denied a clear penalty when Hailstone handled but the Referee gave the free kick inches outside the box.

The second half saw Yaxley bring more pressure on the home defence and Jimmy Dean bundled the ball into the net but had fouled Patching and that incident proved pivotal for ten minutes later the keeper had to go off with an injured arm to be replaced by Ryan Hunt. The new keeper had not really settled in when Kevin Ashby dithered as he tried to clear and Ricky Hailstone robbed him and slotted the ball past the helpless Hunt. A Russell Lawes free kick beat Jordan but curled just wide but it was Yaxley who continued to look the stronger side and Hunt did well to block at the feet of Paul and then did enough to foil Adam Scotcher who was clear but shot wide under the keeper’s challenge. St Neots pressed forward looking for an equaliser and were caught short at the back with thirteen minutes left when Lee Blewett’s delightful through ball inside the full back released Mark Paul who claimed his eighth goal in as many days to put the result beyond doubt. Unfortunately for St Neots there was still time for Tom Moran making only his second start to earn a straight red card after losing his cool with Ian Edge. Sean Murray almost got a late consolation goal for St Neots but his narrow angled volley was just wide.

Team: Martyn Patching (Ryan Hunt 64 mins), Gary Hoy (Kevin Ashby 29 mins), Russell Lawes, Tom Moran, Nicky Hurst, Ben Singleton, Craig Reynolds, Joe Jordan, Rory McKay, Sean Murray, Mark Franklin.

Subs not used: David Coles, Steve Young.

Goal: Mark Franklin (4 minutes)

Man of the Match: Ben Singleton