

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

UCL Premier Division  
**Holbeach United 3 St Neots 1**

Chairman Bob Bridges prediction that Saints, having recently lost two central defenders to illness and injury, might struggle against a physical Holbeach side proved correct as they slipped to a 3-1 defeat at Carters Park. It was a disappointing result after the mid-week victory at Bourne although St Neots were the better team in the first half but struggled to compete in the second period.

Saints started quite brightly with John Coley linking with Ryan Francis but Ryan Hunt was forced to make a sharp save after 5 minutes from Fielding. Ashley Deverell then saw the home keeper tip over his fine effort and Craig Reynolds corner from the right was almost headed into his own net by a Holbeach defender. Holbeach continued to cause some problems to the right-hand side of the St Neots defence but the visitors had a chance to take the lead from the penalty spot when John Coley was needlessly pushed in the back. Unfortunately, the normally reliable Russell Lawes effort was a weak one and Kevin Cross made a comfortable save diving to his left. The keeper then had to hold a low shot from Ryan Francis as the Saints made a quick break from defence. John Coley was then the victim of a bad tackle from Dean Elston which saw the Tigers captain receive the first booking of the match. He was joined in the book on 29 minutes when Russell Lawes, who didn't enjoy one of his best games for the Club, fouled an opponent just outside the left hand side of the penalty area. The resultant free kick was put into the net from close range by Ian Dunn. To their credit, Saints bounced back two minutes later when another Reynolds corner from the right was headed powerfully home by John Coley. Lifted by the equaliser, Saints continued to look the more sharper side although Hunt had to make another useful save in first half injury time.

The second half was only three minutes old when Hunt was beaten by a Holbeach effort but the shot hit the crossbar and was cleared away. Francis was close to giving Saints the lead from another Reynolds cross shortly afterwards when his effort just cleared the bar. After this, the game deteriorated as Saints struggled to maintain their earlier form and to deal with the physical home side who's play was not pretty but typified the style of play in the UCL. Hunt had to make two good saves from right wing efforts. The second of these resulted in a corner which he failed to reach at the back post and Nick Keeble headed home. again the visitors came back and only a good defensive block prevented an equaliser. Holbeach then began to take charge of the game and, after a Dunn effort was just wide, Ivan Finch conceded a free kick in a central position which Keeble fired home passed the despairing left hand of Hunt. Finch was then the culprit again as he gave away a penalty. Keeble, looking for his hat-trick, mirrored Lawes earlier effort when his weak shot was saved by Hunt. Saints were really struggling in defence by this time and Dunn should have added a further goal in injury time but blazed wildly over the bar.

So, a disappointing afternoon and the search continues for a "mean and horrible" centre half to bolster the defence

**Saints:** Hunt, Richardson, Dillnutt, Moran, Lawes (C), Finch, Deverell, Williams, McKenzie, Deverell, Coley, Francis, Reynolds

**Subs:** Daniels (for Richardson), McKenzie (for Francis)

**Not Used:** Facey, Franklin, Patching