

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

UCL Premier Division
Long Buckby 2 St Neots 2

For the second successive Saturday afternoon St Neots produced a Jekyll and Hyde performance unrecognisable after the break from the side that had dominated the first half to lead 2-0. Their capitulation after the restart cost them a point and will have given Manager Scott Houghton some concern about his defence. On a day when only two of the clubs below them managed to win this match must be regarded as a lost opportunity.

In a fairly even start Long Buckby carved out two opportunities but Ryan Hunt dealt competently with a header by Craig Kelly and with St Neots caught out awaiting an offside flag Tony Russell did well to clear the ball off the toe of Kevin Slinn. A Craig Reynolds shot was deflected wide of the home keeper but rebounded from the far post and this signalled a spell of almost total domination by the visitors. Led by an inspired performance from Craig Reynolds they ran the home defence ragged and deservedly went ahead after 25 minutes when Tony Russell found Bas Belgrave with an incisive pass and he set up Craig Reynolds to score with a well placed shot. Reynolds then put Belgrave clear and he was only prevented from doubling the score by a well timed challenge by Andreas Kattos. Belgrave had been the architect of the first goal and he repeated his feet two minutes before the break when his controlled flick played Mark Franklin through and he scored. Sadly that was the only time that Franklin showed the effectiveness of his pace and with Ashley Deverall well below his best the St Neots midfield was quickly overwhelmed in the second half.

However with Ed Huckle marking his first team debut with an impressive non-stop performance the first twenty minutes of the second half were fairly uneventful. James Taylor headed a Reynolds corner over the bar but this was the only notable St Neots attempt on goal before they conceded two very soft goals. The first arrived after 66 minutes when from a quickly taken free kick no one picked up the run of the impressive Jon Crockett who collected a Courtney Herbert pass behind the St Neots defence and crossed for Darren Harmon to score. Two minutes later from a Craig Kelly free kick Crockett was allowed to rise unmarked to head the ball beyond the reach of Ryan Hunt to level the scores. With Tom Moran limping off injured St Neots made two substitutions and competed better in the final ten minutes but by then the home side were equal to their efforts. Defender Rick Kimbell headed over from another Kelly free kick so St Neots might well have conceded a third goal or indeed won the match themselves when Reynolds flashed his shot wide in injury time.

St Neots: Ryan Hunt, Tony Russell, Ivan Finch, Tom Moran (Jason Darvall 79 mins), James Taylor, Ed Huckle, Ashley Deverall, Mark Franklin, Barrington Belgrave, Ryan Francis (Cameron Facey 80 mins), Craig Reynolds.

Subs not used: Stuart Richardson & Scott Houghton

Goals: Craig Reynolds (25 mins), Mark Franklin (43 mins)

Saints MOM: Craig Reynolds