

St. Neots Town Football Club
Season 2007-08 Match Reports

FA Cup
Soham 5 St Neots Town 2

Saturday's FA Cup result was an injustice to the Saints as players and supporters alike came away feeling cheated by a referee who awarded three controversial penalties to the home side and denied one to the visitors at a crucial time in the second half. Even some of the home supporters couldn't believe some of the decisions and expressed their sympathy after the game. Saints cause also wasn't helped by the dismissal of John Coley just before the hour mark up to when the match could have gone either way as the teams were very evenly matched.

Manager Scott Houghton's tactics were spot on with the players available as he switched to a 4 - 4 - 2 system and looked to the pace of Franklin and Coley to stretch the home teams rather ponderous back four. Coley fired an early shot just over the bar and Soham came close after six minutes when Roy Bloxham had to make a good double save. He was also forced to tip a shot over ten minutes later shortly after Steve Kuhne had come close with a shot from the edge of the box. Things continued to be pretty even until Saints broke the deadlock after twenty nine minutes. Jon Hoggett sent Mark Franklin through on the right hand side. He outpaced the home defence and shot across keeper Ian Pledger into the corner of the net.

Three minutes later, things got even better for the Saints as, once again, Hoggett won the ball on the edge of the visitors penalty area, fed Ryan Francis who sent John Coley away from near the half way line down the lefthand touchline. The home defence fatally backed off, letting Coley into the penalty area where he slotted home the second goal.

Stung by these reverses, Soham hit back forcing Bloxham into a brilliant save from a shot from the edge of the box. On forty one minutes, he did even better by diving to his left to save Furnells penalty and the follow up effort. Saints were then forced to substitute the injured Mark Barry before Soham pulled a goal back through Paul Jones in first half injury time following a mistake by Tom Moran.

Buoyed by this goal, Charles Libam equalised five minutes into the second half with a curling shot that Bloxham got a hand to but couldn't keep out. Three minutes later, Furnell made up for his earlier miss from the spot by slotting home the second penalty given for a handball offence. Having taken the lead, Soham continued to press as the Saints looked to recover from these setbacks.

Things then got worse for the visitors with John Coley's dismissal and the refusal of the referee to give a blatant penalty following a push in the area. The game was then, effectively, killed off in the seventy first minute when Jones scored his second goal of the game as the Saints defence failed to close him down. Ten minutes later, after another brilliant Bloxham save, the final penalty incident of the game saw Libram add to his tally with the fifth and final goal. Soham were close to adding to the score before substitute Jamie Osborne's shot across the goal was almost turned in by Ryan Francis.

Saints: Bloxham, Finch, Barry, Hoggett, Russell, Moran, Franklin, Deverell, Kuhne, Coley, Francis

Subs: Ashby, Fisk (for Barry 42), Osborne (for Kuhne 81), Fehmi, Reynolds (for Deverell 61)

MOM: Roy Bloxham & Tony Russell