

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

UCL Premier Division
Newport Pagnell 0 St Neots Town 3

St Neots moved proudly to the top spot in the Premier Division of the UCL as they comprehensively defeated Newport Pagnell who had started the day one place ahead of them.

They were aided by the home side being reduced to ten men two minutes before the break when home striker Vinny Shrieves appeared to stamp on Tony Russell off the ball and after consulting an Assistant the Referee produced his red card. By then St Neots were two goals to the good and after the break they seemed content to coast along and only in the last ten minutes of the match did they once again show real urgency.

With both teams protecting undefeated records in the league the opening phase was tightly contested. Ivan Finch had a header off target and Vinny Shrieves got behind the St Neots defence but clipped his shot onto the roof of the net and then Newport were lucky not to be behind after ten minutes when a net bound shot from Ryan Francis was diverted over his own crossbar by a defender. After 19 minutes Roy Bloxham in the St Neots goal had to make his only significant save of the match as he stretched to turn a strong header from John Thorpe over the crossbar. Seven minutes later St Neots took the lead as Ryan Francis facing the wrong way produced an incisive through pass to find Barrington Belgrave and he hammered home a fierce low drive catching goalkeeper James Howarth out at his near post. Then five minutes before the break the lead was doubled as Mark Franklin was brought down just outside the area and from Arin Fehmi's cleverly weighted free kick Ivan Finch rose to head past the keeper. The sending off incident sparked further problems for the Referee who sent off the Newport Manager for abusing an Assistant Referee.

Newport sent on two substitutes after half time in an attempt to retrieve their situation and there was also a very welcome return to senior football for defender Gary Watts after his severe leg break on for Tom Moran. After Tony Russell had sliced a clearance past his own post there was very little notable action in the first half hour after the restart. St Neots seemed to be comfortable with a two goal lead against the ten men and never looked like making their numerical superiority pay until the last fifteen minutes with skipper Jon Hoggett marshalling a defence that seldom looked threatened. Then Arin Fehmi triggered a better final spell with a shot well saved by the home keeper. Steve Kuhne who had a very quiet match then chipped just over the bar and the visitors were denied a blatantly obvious penalty when Thorpe controlled the ball with his hand to effect a clearance. However St Neots were to have the last word a minute from time. Tony Russell set up substitute David Fisk who moved inside his marker on the right and cross for new boy substitute Stuart Beevor to mark his debut with a neatly headed goal.

Footnote: For the first time since the club's resurrection in 1996 both first team and Reserves head their respective Divisions in the UCL.

Saints: Bloxham, Finch, Russell, Hoggett, Moran, Belgrave, Franklin, Deverall, Kuhne, Francis, Fehmi.

Subs: Watts (for Moran 46 mins), Beevor (for Belgrave 66 mins), Fisk (for Franklin 75 mins), Barry & Murray.

Scorers: Belgrave (26), Finch (40) & Beevor (89)

MOM : Jon Hoggett