

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

UCL League KO Cup
St Neots Town 1 Northampton Spencer 2

Saints bowed out of their second cup competition in three weeks with a tepid performance against visiting Northampton Spencer. With no fewer than seven changes in the starting line up from the side that had moved to the top of the table three days earlier there was little continuity as the Manager opted to try out the full extent of his first team squad. The visitors too, with both FA Cup and FA Vase commitment in the next fortnight made multiple changes in their side so the match took some time to settle into a rhythm.

In fact the only serious attempt on goal by either side in the first twenty minutes was a 25 yards free kick from Russell Lawes that rebounded from the inside of a post to be gathered by the relieved visiting keeper. Defences were well on top and it was two more free kicks that were to prove the next serious attempts on goal. After 22 minutes an effort from Arin Fehmi was saved and three minutes later a second Lawes 'special' was pushed away at full length by Oli Urquhart who was the busiest of the two keepers in these early stages. Almost half an hour passed before home keeper Roy Bloxham saw any action and then he had only two comfortable saves to make with Gaston Giei heading the visitors' best chance over the bar. Two more free kicks from Fehmi failed to make the breakthrough and on the stroke of half time Buckland produced a significant clearance to keep St Neots goal intact from a Josh Urquhart header.

So despite having the lions share of first half play St Neots failed to take advantage and they soon paid the penalty as Spencer moved up a gear straight after the break. On 49 minutes Dan Chilton showed great skill to control a through ball and volley a fierce drive that Bloxham tipped away for a corner but the visitors maintained their pressure and nine minutes later Davies crossed for the unmarked Dan Chilton to produce a fine downward header beyond the reach of Bloxham to open the scoring. Ryan Francis playing a withdrawn midfield role did sent one shot just inches wide with Urquhart beaten and St Neots then attempted to pep up their performance as they introduced two substitutes – Ben Cole for the injured Sean Murray and Mark Franklin for Fehmi. However Spencer stamped their authority on the match with a second goal after 71 minutes. Once again questions had to be asked of the St Neots defence as Chris Davies was allowed almost unchallenged to collect a low cross from Graham Cottle to shoot on the turn past Bloxham. St Neots late rally threatened to earn extra time as substitute Ben Cole pounced on a Kevin Ashby volley to net from close range to close the gap. Steve Kuhne who had played all over the field without any success did volley onto the roof of the net and the visiting keeper ensured his side's place in the next round with two excellent late saves to deny Lawes and Franklin. However St Neots can have few complaints in defeat and Chairman Bob Bridges summed up their feelings saying 'winning the league is our priority this season.'

Saints: Bloxham, Fisk, Barry, Francis, Ashby, Lawes, Beevor, Belgrave, Murray, Kuhne, Fehmi.

Scorer: Cole 81 mins

Subs: Buckland (for Beevor 9 mins), Cole (for Murray 63 mins), Franklin (for Fehmi 65 mins), Watts & Patching.

MOM: Russell Lawes