

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

FA Vase

**St Neots Town 1    Soham Town Rangers 3**

Saints' day didn't start well when Club Captain Nathan Buckland sent a text to Manager Scott Houghton saying that he had decided to quit the team. Disrespectful to all concerned at the Club to say the least but, in some respect, it acted as a spur to the players who took to the field to try and avenge the early season FA Cup exit to the same opponents.

It wasn't to be but Saints played some good passing football, particularly in the first half, but failed to put in the quality of crosses required to cause Soham too many problems. With Kevin Ashby replacing Buckland the home side started confidently with an early Stuart Beevor shot over the bar and Ivan Finch wide with a left footed effort. On 11 minutes, Bas Belgrave made the first of many strong runs during the game but the final ball didn't run kindly for Beevor whose next effort two minutes later was mishit across the goal when better contact would have given the Saints the lead. Soham had hardly been seen as an attacking force but, in their first real attack, snatched the lead after 21 minutes. Russell Lawes blocked a Charles Libam effort and, from the resultant corner, Saints failed to clear the danger and Andy Furnell knocked the ball home.

Two minutes later, controversy reigned as a superb ball from Beevor released Belgrave down the right flank. Visiting keeper Ian Pledger came hurtling out of his box and clearly took Belgrave out. Ironically, Belgrave was in the act of shooting as this took place and his effort just failed to find the net. Referee Sumner produced a yellow card for the Soham keeper when a sending off would have been more appropriate. Shortly afterwards, Saints were awarded another free kick for a foul on Steve Kuhne but Ryan Francis's effort was easily saved by Pledger. Francis then had another shot saved before a quick break by Soham saw Jimson shoot wide after a lay off by Furnell.

The second half saw an early Soham goal disallowed for offside before Pledger had to be alert in tipping an excellent Russell Lawes free kick over the bar after a foul on Beevor. Kuhne then tried to set something up for a colleague before a Saints move broke down which resulted in Darren Jimson firing home a second goal for the visitors on 54 minutes. Things then got worse for the home side 8 minutes later when a mistake by Jon Hoggett allowed Furnell to score his second of the game past the helpless Patching.

To their credit, Saints tried hard to turn things round as Steve Kuhne headed over from a free kick and substitute Sean Murray set up Belgrave for a shot which flew wide. With the game more stretched, Patching had to make a fine save from Libam as he twisted and turned in the box. He then followed this up with two more saves until, three minutes into injury time, Saints received some reward for their efforts. Keeper Pledger couldn't hold a shot from Belgrave and the ball fell to Mark Franklin who smashed the ball into the net.

So, disappointment for the Saints who must now pick themselves up for the visit of Stotfold on Tuesday and look to get back to winning ways.

**Saints:** Patching, Lawes, Barry, Beevor, Ashby, Russell, Finch, Hoggett, Belgrave, Kuhne, Francis

**Subs:** Osborne, Murray (for Beevor), Fehmi (for Francis), Franklin (for Kuhne), Bloxham

**Saints MOM:** Tony Russell