

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

Huntingdonshire Senior Cup
Godmanchester 0 St Neots Town 1

St Neots averted a potential Senior Cup banana skin with a rather shallow victory over Godmanchester who, because of injury, were forced to play outfield player Stephen Hurst as an emergency goalkeeper. However the victory came at a huge price because just past the half hour inspirational defender Tony Russell was helped off with a hamstring injury that could sideline him for at least month. However it was a day to remember for defender Gary Watts. Named in the starting line up for the first time after his long lay off through a broken leg he scored his first goal since March 2006 and it proved to be sufficient to ease his side through to the second round of the Senior Cup. St Neots did not play well and the host side have only themselves to blame in defeat for they had the better possession throughout but failed to beat Jon Chatfield who kept his first clean sheet of the season.

Godmanchester started brightly winning three corners in succession and only a great recovery tackle by Russell on Lee Boon robbed the striker who was clear on goal. However the home side contributed to their own downfall by conceding too many free kicks – nine in the first 20 minutes compared to three by the visitors. St Neots settled down and had one good early spell when they could have scored twice. First Steve Kuhne brought a full length save from the stand in keeper with a header from a Mark Franklin free kick that was pushed for a corner and then from that set piece Mark Barry's floated cross was hammed against a goal post by Gary Watts. However St Neots' approach seemed far too casual whilst the Godmanchester side needed no encouragement. Hurst then pushed a stinging free kick by Chris Garwell for another corner but the loss of Russell after 31 minutes saw St Neots defence in temporary disarray. After 34 minutes Jon Brierley was booked when he deliberately tripped Franklin whose pace had taken him clear and just before the break the well placed Cameron cleared off the line from substitute Kevin Ashby.

There was no obvious difference in the pattern of play after the break. Godmanchester created their best chance of the match breaking swiftly out of defence to outnumber St Neots four to two with Steve Thompson feeding the unmarked Paul Bass whose cross found Lee Boon but Chatfield blocked the close range shot with his feet. Chatfield then saved from Bass but neither side looked decisive enough in front of goal. Then on 65 minutes the home defence failed to deal with a Mark Franklin corner and Gary Watts powered a header into the roof of the net. This should have given St Neots the confidence they had been lacking but only substitute Arin Fehmi looked like posing problems and when he was hacked down by Brierley it earned the Godmanchester his second yellow card and an early bath. The home side created two more chances to send the match into extra time. First Boon had a close range header comfortably saved by Chatfield but the keeper was unsighted when he produced the save of the match three minutes from time to push a Steve Thompson volley away. St Neots might have had a second goal when a Ryan Francis effort was headed off the line by Rob Stamper but that would have given the visitors a flattering margin of victory they had not merited.

Saints: Chatfield, Hoggett, Barry, Russell, Watts, Garwell, Deverall, Franklin, Francis, Kuhne, Belgrave,

Subs: Ashby, (for Russell 31 mins), Fehmi (for Franklin 68 mins), George, Moran, Finch.

Scorer: Gary Watts (65 mins)

MOM: Jon Chatfield