

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

UCL Premier Division
St Neots Town 1 Boston Town 0

Having deposed joint leaders Deeping seven days earlier St Neots followed up by knocking new leaders Boston Town off top spot with another single goal victory. The three points lifted the home side back into third place in the table and now their championship challenge looks to be back on course. With Barrington Belgrave still sidelined St Neots named an unchanged side but suffered a blow when full back Tony Russell limped off late in the first half with what looked like a recurrence of his earlier injury. Boston were a physical and not very well disciplined outfit but a significant factor was the way in which the St Neots defence in general and Steve Dogbe in particular shackled Boston's record goal scorer Gary Bull who never managed a single significant shot on goal. The midfield was neatly dominated by Jon Hoggett and Danny Marlow and Luigi Rocco produced another non-stop performance to earn another man of the match award.

In an extraordinary first quarter of an hour Referee Richard Sidlin booked three visiting players for a variety of offences and St Neots created three good chances. A Rocco shot looked net bound but was deflected wide by Neal Spafford, a Tony Russell shot from the edge of the area brought a great save from James Doughty and then Mark Burrows fired high over the bar with St Neots looking dangerous at set pieces. After 19 minutes Boston's first serious attempt on goal – a header by Garath Pritchard was cleared off the line by Paul Bloss and the same St Neots player then produced a searching free kick for Burrows to head wide. The lively Rocco beat the visiting keeper in a race to the ball but had to settle for a corner whilst at the other end Paul Goodhand shot well wide. When Russell limped off St Neots surprisingly sent on Mark Franklin as a midfield substitute moving David Fisk to an unfamiliar full back berth.

Both sides created early second half chances. Jon Chatfield produced his best save of the match to turn over the bar a perfectly placed shot from Pritchard whilst at the other end Fisk and Ryan Francis combined to set up Jon Hoggett but his shot was also well saved by the visiting keeper. After 53 minutes Kevin Byrne was brought down just feet outside the penalty area producing yet another yellow card for a defender but the free kick was wasted but two minutes later Byrne was involved again winning a Rocco cross to set up Ryan Francis who scrambled in his first league goal since 2nd October and this proved the match winner. However there was still action at both ends to come. Rocco brought another excellent save from Doughty at the expense of a corner and Byrne got the ball in the net but Francis was penalised for a push as he set up the striker. Francis then headed wide from a Bloss cross and St Neots sent on two late substitutes without much effect. Boston with nothing to lose tried to produce an equaliser but in added injury time they lost Ollie Pinner sent off when he picked up his second yellow card for a rash challenge on Rocco. It was three hard earned but well deserved points and the perfect start to 2008.

Saints: Chatfield, Russell, Bloss, Burrows, Dogbe, Marlow, Hoggett, Rocco, Fisk, Francis, Byrne.

Subs: Franklin (for Russell 39 mins), Barry (for Fisk 86 mins), Cole (for Francis 90 mins), Ashby & Fox.

Man of the Match: Luigi Rocco