

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

UCL Premier Division  
**Long Buckby 3 St Neots Town 1**

St Neots produced their worst performance of the season to inevitably suffer their first away league defeat of the season at Long Buckby. The sheer ineptness of the performance can be shown by disclosing that they played for more than an hour against ten men after a Buckby player had been red-carded and in the entire ninety minutes they failed to produce a single shot that the home keeper had to save. With all of the other teams in the top seven of the UCL Premier Division winning on the day it seems that St Neots lingering hopes of the championship and promotion to Level Four next season courtesy of their recent seven match unbeaten run finally ebbed away and they can blame no one but themselves. The only crumb of comfort was that another debutant striker Chris Johnson almost scored with his first touch when introduced as a second half substitute and then went on to claim St Neots goal that was too little even to be regarded as a consolation. With three defeats away from Rowley Park in their last four matches (the other two in Cup competition) it is now time for the Managers to go back to the drawing board.

They could not have got off to a worse start when after three minutes a clumsy challenge by McElroy on Blackwood produced a penalty kick clinically put away by Ben Foster. Things never really improved in the next half hour as Foster was put clear only to be foiled by a fine save by Jon Chatfield and Darren Lynch netted for Buckby but to St Neots relief he was flagged offside. St Neots first attempt on goal came after 24 minutes when a well delivered free kick by McElroy found the head of Andy Findlay who put his effort over the bar. Five minutes later Buckby firebrand Darren Harmon received a straight red card after raising his hand to Findlay after he had failed to win a free kick. Buckby quickly reshuffled and although Barrington Belgrave though he had been denied a penalty St Neots had little to offer against a side making light of their numerical disadvantage. They continued to dominate and could have scored twice more before the break with Chatfield bravely blocking at the feet of Lynch and the impressive Steve Blackwood rattling the crossbar with a rising shot from 25 yards.

Early in the second half St Neots opted for a fresh approach bringing on Johnson for the disappointing Mark Franklin and Ivan Finch for Danny Marlow. Johnson sent a shot over the bar with his first touch but Buckby effectively put the match beyond the visitors with their second goal. It was set up by a brilliant back heel by Darren Lynch that took out two defenders and released Steve Blackwood to cut in from the left to score. Within two minutes St Neots only really inspiring move produced their goal. A Paul Bloss free kick was won in the air by Tony Russell and his knock down found Steve Dogbe whose cross released Chris Johnson and he dived full length to head home. However that was the only real chance for the visitors and both Lynch and Foster wasted good openings to extend Buckby's lead. However it was appropriate that the home side should have the last word which they did three minutes from time when Jon Crockett's through ball released Ben Foster and he showed fine pace and a pair of heels to his marker as he claimed his 28th UCL goal of the season.

**Saints:** Chatfield, McElroy, Bloss, Dogbe, Russell, Hoggett, Franklin, Marlow, Belgrave, Findlay, Barry.

**Subs:** Johnson (for Franklin 57 mins), Finch (for Marlow 57 mins), Francis, (for Barry 71 mins), Fisk & Fox.

**Man of the Match:** Dean McElroy