

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

UCL Reserve Divisions KO Cup Final  
**St Neots Town res. 1 Blackstones res. 4**  
*(at Rushden & Higham FC)*

It has been an exceptional season for both of these Reserve sides. St Neots were promoted from the lower division of the UCL and achieved a top five finish in the table as well as reaching three Cup Finals but they were unable to add the Reserve KO Cup trophy to the Hunts Scott Gatty Cup already safe in their trophy cabinet. Blackstones with the runners-up medals already won added this trophy to their impressive achievement for the third time proving just too strong on the night for a youthful St Neots line up. It was 42 years ago that St Neots last appeared in this final – long before any of the present squad were born so their achievement in reaching this final will be recorded in the Club history.

Two goals in a minute midway through the first half gave Blackstones a stranglehold on the match they were never to relinquish and from that point on St Neots were chasing shadows. Each side had a couple of early chances with Andy Sincock testing the Blackstones keeper and Ross West firing wide for St Neots whilst at the other end a shot by Nathan Steele was well saved and a diving header by Chris McRoyal passed the wrong side of a post. The turning point from the early skirmish came after 23 minutes when an inswinging corner by Elton Holmes deceived Ryan Rayner and Malcolm Duff fired in a low shot to put Blackstones ahead. Less than sixty seconds later with St Neots reeling from the initial shock the experienced Matt Doyle set up Richard Bond and he comprehensively beat the keeper with a well placed shot. A third goal after 33 minutes effectively won the tie although St Neots never gave up. A careless foul by Andy Clark presented the Stamford side with a free kick some 30 yards from goal and Elton Holmes precise and powerful free kick crept in at the far post to set up a 3-0 advantage for his side. Shane Fox brought a good save from Richard Stainsby and then on the stroke of half time Kevin Ashby gave St Neots hope with a well taken goal from an Andy Wale corner.

St Neots made a determined start after the break with Andy Wale guilty of a wild finish over the crossbar after good work by Jon Hall and Ben Cole brought the save of the match from Stainsby. In the St Neots goal Rayner saved well from a close range header by Paul Bird but Blackstones had regained the initiative and were rewarded twenty minutes from time when Nathan Steele took a return pass from Richard Bond to finish clinically and end St Neots' faltering hopes. Two saves by Stainsby from substitutes Anthony Davis and Michael Stannard denied St Neots a late consolation goal as Blackstones deservedly lifted the trophy.

**Reserves:** Rayner, Wale, Jon Hall, Webb, Ashby, West, Clark, Sincock, Cole, Fox & James Hall.

**Subs:** Bitting (for Sincock 58 mins), Davis (for Fox 66 mins), Stannard (for Clark 84 mins), Lain, & Bingham

**Man of the match:** Kevin Ashby