

St. Neots Town Football Club  
Season 2006-07 Match Reports

TUESDAY 5/9/06  
F A CUP PRELIMINARY ROUND REPLAY  
**Brackley 4 St Neots 0**

This heavy FA Cup reversal proved for St Neots to be more about the strength of their team in this and future matches than the actual result. Brackley were clearly the better side on the night as the final score line suggests as they outplayed their visitors in most departments. However St Neots options were severely limited when Saturday's stand-in skipper Ricky Dear joined injured skipper Jon Hoggett on the unavailable list because of a family illness. The reshuffle saw Scott Grant pushed into the midfield holding role and a FA Cup debut for Ross Sommers. However the real concern came ten minutes from time when inspirational defender Nicky Hurst suffered what may be a serious medial ligament injury to his ankle and he could be out for some time.

For much of this match St Neots were forced into rearguard defensive play as the quality of passing of the respective sides handed Brackley the initiative. The first goal did not arrive until the 20<sup>th</sup> minute but by then Elliott Sandy had missed a simple header and Martyn Patching had denied Tom Winters with an acrobatic save. Then amidst great controversy Matt Murphy was awarded the opening goal after a desperate goal line scramble with St Neots players vehement that the ball had not crossed the line. Referee John Steel was in no position to make a judgement but his Assistant flagged in favour of Brackley so the goal stood. At the other end Nicky Hurst headed Mark Franklin's cross over the bar with St Neots first real chance but after 32 minutes Scott Hadland sent man of the match Robbie Beard clear and he neatly stepped inside Sommers to score with a low shot. St Neots claimed offside and Hurst was booked for protesting too loudly but once again the goal stood.

Before the break Patching produced two good saves to keep the deficit at a reasonable level but two goals in six minutes shortly after half time clinched Brackley's place in the next round. Elliott Sandy smashed in the first after the St Neots back line had been breached and then Beard tormented the defence before setting up Scott Hadland for the fourth goal. To St Neots' credit they refused to give in and they continued to defend doggedly without being able to create much themselves with Gary Walker too often a lone attacker surrounded by Brackley defenders. However substitute Sean Murray set up Walker for what should have been a consolation goal but he dithered and was robbed. St Neots will hope to have key players available before their next National Cup outing in the FA Vase in four weeks time.

**Team:** Patching, Sommers, Lawes, Grant, Hurst (Hilton 80 mins), Deverall, Franklin (Jordan 66 mins), Claridge (Murray 70 mins), Kuhne, Walker Endersby.

**Subs not used:** Hoggett & Hunt

**Saints man of the match:** Russell Lawes