

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

UCL Premier Division
St Neots Town 2 Blackstones 1

St Neots moved back up to second spot in the Premier Division courtesy of this valuable victory over Blackstones. After a disappointing first half St Neots produced a much more convincing display after the break and deserved their victory over a side that have lots of matches in hand but never looked convincing. There was a debut goal for St Neots most recent signing Andy Findlay and a welcome return as substitute by Barrington Belgrave who has been out with injury since Boxing Day. However the injury jinx struck again with defender Mark Burrows sidelined after just 13 minutes and he will need intensive treatment prior to a return to fitness. Danny Marlow and Jon Hoggett were back to their best in midfield and Jon Chatfield made some important saves to earn the man of the match tag. There was nearly a very dramatic start when in the first minute new boy Andy Findlay challenged the visiting goalkeeper who dropped the ball but Findlay's shot rebounded off the keeper for a corner. The two sides had drawn at Stamford three weeks earlier and they seemed to show each other some respect in the opening stages with neither creating a great deal. Blackstones' first chance came after 11 minutes when Liam Harrald played Phil Stebbing clear but Chatfield produced a great block to stifle his chance. The loss of Burrows so early in the match seemed to unsettle St Neots and Kevin Ainslie shot wide with the reshaped defence looking square. Dan Cotton had a shot deflected but four minutes before the break St Neots were ahead thanks to some skill and quick thinking by the new boy. A lengthy clearance from Chatfield had the Stones defence back peddling and when Robbie Blowers misjudged the bounce of the ball the keeper was caught out of position and Andy Findlay's neatly judged lob nestled in the net to give St Neots an unexpected half time lead. St Neots best first half move came right on the whistle as Jon Hoggett and David Fisk combined to set up Danny Marlow who shot disappointingly wide.

Both sides emerged for the second half showing a greater sense of urgency in their play. Chatfield produced another fine reflex save when Stebbing's pace took him clear on the right and after 57 minutes from a series of corners Blackstones got themselves back into the match. Dan Cotton sent over an inswinging corner that was allowed to bounce in the six yards box and Richard Jones stabbed the ball home. That was the wake up call St Neots needed and with Belgrave and Mark Franklin on for Findlay and Fisk they adopted a more attacking stance and were rewarded eight minutes from time. A short Franklin free kick invited Marlow to cross and the ball was headed down by Hoggett for the lively Kevin Byrne to claim his fifth goal in eight games. This set up a lively last ten minutes with a great deal of added time played during which Mark Franklin and Bas Belgrave both went close to extending the lead before Mark Barry crowned a good all round performance by clearing off the line to preserve maximum points for his side.

Saints: Chatfield, Russell, Barry, Burrows, Dogbe, Francis, Fisk, Hoggett, Marlow, Byrne, Findlay.

Subs: McElroy (for Burrows 13 mins), Belgrave (for Findlay 65 mins), Franklin (for Fisk 80 mins), Maitland & Finch.

Man of the Match: Jon Chatfield