

St. Neots Town Football Club
Season 2008-09 Match Reports

F.A. Vase

Long Melford 0 St Neots 2

A double substitution after 61 minutes by St Neots Manager Marvin Johnson proved to be the key to this FA Vase victory in Suffolk. He sent on Jon Hall for Nathan Eno and Jamie Steele for Pete Okechukwu and between them the substitutes contrived to turn a frustrating afternoon into a place in the next round of the National competition. Up to the change St Neots had dominated much of the play but failed to turn their superior possession into attempts on goal whilst the home side were largely content to soak up the pressure and hope that they could turn occasional attacking forays into goals. A large contingent of St Neots supporters who had travelled on a specially commissioned coach were just beginning to get restless when the opening goal came and from that point on there was only going to be one winner.

The first half was fairly even despite St Neots having the bulk of the play. Back in his holding midfield role Jon Hoggett orchestrated much of the movement with Matt Bannister and Luke Knight probing the home defence but chances were scarce. Bannister headed wide and Knight got the ball in the net after 26 minutes but was ruled marginally offside. Two good saves by home keeper Floyd Kroll from Declan Rogers' free kicks were followed just past the half hour by Melford's first serious attempt on the St Neots goal but Jon Chatfield saw Danny Brind's shot pass just the wrong side of a post. Dean McElroy was enjoying some attacking freedom and he failed to get any power behind a near post header and then saw another effort rebound from the cross bar and that proved to be the closest to a first half goal. The best effort by the home side was a volley by Richard Grimster that Chatfield saved comfortably.

Half time was the chance for reassessment and St Neots looked more positive upon the resumption. Dean McElroy again well advanced shot wide but after little progress was made Marvin Johnson made his changes. Almost immediately Jon Hall sent a rising shot just beyond the far post and after another smart move down the left Jamie Steele had the ball in the net but was judged to have fouled the goalkeeper. From another Jon Hall cross the ball was not cleared and the hard working Matt Bannister opened the scoring with just eleven minutes remaining. The goal knocked any remaining resistance out of the host side and with four minutes left a pinpoint cross by Hall picked out the head of Jamie Steele and he claimed his first St Neots goal to clinch the victory.

Saints: Chatfield, McElroy (D), Eno, Hoggett, Dyett, Dogbe, Knight, Bannister, Okechukwu, Rocco, Rogers.

Subs: Jon Hall (for Eno 61 mins), Steele (for Okechukwu 76 mins), James Hall & Kenneford.

Man of the Match: Matt Bannister