

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

UCL Premier Division
Northampton Spencer 0 St Neots Town 2

After beating Stotfold way back in October St Neots had waited 168 days for their second away League victory of the season and it came at Northampton Spencer whom they had twice defeated this season at Rowley Park in league and Hinchingsbrook Cup. The inspiration came from yet another new signing Glen Fuff formerly with Kings Lynn and Cambridge City. He made his debut wearing the captains' armband and former a new defensive partnership with former French international Sylvain Legwinski that seemed to galvanise the rest of the team. Defensively St Neots looked totally sound until the final minute of the match but they kept their first clean sheet since 1st November and they scored two well taken goals to give them their three points. The shake up in team selection was dramatic with six changes in the starting line up from the side that had lost at Desborough three days earlier but the combination looked more balanced and augurs well for the remainder of the season.

There was early drama after just three minutes when goalkeeper Carl Mackney attempted to dribble the ball back into his area to pick up but was judged to have handled outside his area and match Referee Rob Earl decided only to penalise him with a yellow card when greater punishment might have proved very significant. First half chances were rare at either end of the field but St Neots enjoyed the greater possession but some wayward passing saw them unable to capitalise. Spencer's only notable first half effort on goal was a rising shot by Dan Webster blocked by a defender whilst St Neots did half efforts from Declan Rogers that was only saved at the second attempt by Sean Markie and Pete Okechukwu whose header from a Rogers corner flew a foot the wrong side of a post. Markie had to come 40 yards out of his goal to clear as both Josh Sozzo and Okechukwu sprang the offside trap and the first half ended with a shot by Luke Knight just over the bar.

St Neots looked more positive after half time and Sozzo had a shot deflected for a corner but was then substituted by Chris Johnson. Another Okechukwu header this time from a Luke Knight corner was also wide but the breakthrough came after 70 minutes when a brilliantly weighted cross field pass over the defence from Jon Hall released Matt Kenneford on the right and he took his time to draw Markie off his line before shooting under his body for his second goal in three matches. Michael Hyem saw a shot deflected just wide and the result was confirmed six minutes from time when another shrewd through pass by Jon Hall was latched on by Pete Okechukwu who maintained his position as Saints leading scorer with a calm finish. There was still time for St Neots to give a five minutes Premier Division substitution debut to former Huntingdon striker Lee Bassett and in the final minute Spencer were denied a late consolation goal when Ray Hackett's header following a corner rebounded from the crossbar.

St Neots: Mackney, Bannister, Jon Hall, Fuff, Legwinski, Kenneford, Knight, Hyem, Sozzo, Okechukwu, Rogers.

Subs: Johnson (for Sozzo 56 mins), Bassett (for Okechukwu 85 mins), James Hall & Steve Dogbe

Man of the Match: Glen Fuff