

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

UCL Premier Division
St Neots Town 1 Stewart & Lloyds Corby 2

If Stewart & Lloyds go on to win the Premier Division title as they are favourites to do then they will look back on their smash and grab raid at Rowley Park as a key moment. St Neots matched their lofty opponents everywhere on the park except for in front of goal because at the break St Neots had created five or six good chances compared to the two half chances that had been converted by the visitors. What Manager Steve Lomas can do to encourage his players the finishing skills they need to get their true reward from their performances is an open question. There were plus points from the defeat with debutant Lee Bassett coming in to lead the line with great combative skill and determination and deservedly capping his appearance with first ever Premier Division goal but it was not enough. In midfield Michael Hyem is beginning to look a consistent performer and a fully fit Ismael Ehui will always challenge for a regular berth.

Bassett made an early impact just failing to reach a through ball from Hyem that the visiting keeper did well to steal off his toe. Ehui then shot disappointingly over the bar after a great four man move and Tony Scully took a return pass from Hyem but put his shot well wide of the far post. Visiting keeper Richard Lavin did well to push a shot from Hyem on to the roof of his net and then after 26 minutes with their first genuine shot at goal the visitors took the lead as Michael Byrne 40 yards from goal spotted Carl Mackney off his line and sent an inch perfect chip into the net. James Hall had a curling shot pushed for a corner and Steve Dogbe saw a close range shot scrambled off the line by Steve Julian following a corner. Bassett also shot wildly over the bar when well placed and then in first half added time Paul Caswell won the ball in a tussle with Glen Fuff and stroked it towards goal and the lively Michael Byrne darted between two defenders to add a second goal for the visitors.

St Neots were forced into a defensive reshuffle when Jon Hall limped off injured early in the second half and his replacement Matt Bannister was quickly in the action lobbing onto the roof of the visitors' net. From a Hyem cross Lee Bassett beat his marker in the air but headed straight into the arms of the goalkeeper and he then set up Tony Scully whose shot was wide. However after 65 minutes St Neots thought they might be back in the game as Scully did well to set up Lee Bassett for a side footed shot to pull the score back to 2-1. The visitors showed great experience defending in numbers and restricting St Neots openings to preserve their narrow lead and on the break Byrne was close to a hat trick when his well placed shot beat Mackney but rebounded from a post. St Neots managed to retain the better of possession but chances in the last quarter of an hour were few and insignificant as Stewart & Lloyds held out for what might prove a priceless victory.

St Neots: Mackney, Dogbe, Jon Hall, Hyem, Fuff, Reed, Scully, Knight, Bassett, Ehui, James Hall

Subs: Bannister (for Jon Hall 54 mins), Johnson (for Ehui 59 mins), Abraham (for James Hall 86 mins), Kenneford & Hughes.

Man of the Match: Michael Hyem