

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

Hinchingsbrooke Cup Final
At Jubilee Park, Huntingdon
St Ives Town 2 St Neots Town 3

This was a tremendous Cup Final full of competitive committed football and it kept a crowd of more than 300 on their toes right up to the final whistle. It was the fourth meeting of the two sides this season and all three previous meetings have gone St Ives way – two in the league and the other in the league KO Cup – by an odd goal on each occasion but this was to be St Neots night. They defended well throughout and rode their luck before taking three chances to run up a seemingly inaccessible 3-0 advantage. However as they have demonstrated so many times St Ives never know when they are beaten and they pulled two goals back and then battered the St Neots defence in the last half hour of the match in search of an equaliser. It was to be St Neots first victory in a senior Cup competition since lifting the Hunts Premier Cup in 2002 under Manager Chris Howell and the Hinchingsbrooke Cup in 1989 under Manager Pedro Holden. St Ives will have been very disappointed not to have equalled the local Senior Cup treble they achieved two seasons ago (they have won the Senior Cup and the Premier Cup Final is still to come) but they more than played their part in a memorable 100th playing of the Hinchingsbrooke Cup Final

Losing the toss St Neots had to play into the setting sun and St Ives were quickly trying to take full advantage. Lee Crockett in the St Neots goal had to make four early excellent saves to keep his goal intact throwing himself bravely at the feet of Junior McDougald following an inswinging corner from Dan Moyes and then leaving his area to rob Scott Fielding when the St Ives leading scorer looked certain to put his side in front. He also punched away another Moyes corner under pressure and then spread himself to block a Moyes shot after he had found himself unmarked ten yards from goal. The St Neots attack intelligently led by Shane Fox was restricted to few early chances but Fox was twice denied by Rob Mackney and Matt Kenneford shot over the bar when well placed. The first goal arrived after 34 minutes when Luke Abraham drifted past Lloyd Howard and crossed to the far post when Pete Okechukwu controlled the ball to fire low past Mackney and six minutes later the St Ives followers were stunned as their defence failed to clear a corner from Luke Knight and Steve Dogbe stabbed the ball home from eight yards – only his second goal for St Neots.

St Ives resumed the second half without striker Junior McDougald who was suffering a neck and shoulder injury with Liam Kennett substituting and they quickly set about repairing the damage. However in their first attack after the break St Neots extended their lead to three goals as a Matt Kenneford shot was only parried by Mackney, Michael Hyem followed up to force the keeper into a poor clearance and Kenneford followed up to score. St Ives roared back and within two minutes were back in the game as Kennett won the ball on the right and cut in to feed Ricky Dear and the firmer St Neots player gave Crockett no chance with a well placed shot just inside a post from well outside the penalty area. A Luke Knight free kick was narrowly wide and then Glen Fuff was booked for bringing down Fielding. Fuff was the last defender but the Referee decided a yellow card was the correct sanction much to St Ives protests. After 62 minutes another shot from outside the

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area by Dan Moyes beat the outstretched dive of Crockett to reduce the deficit to a single goal and it seemed St Ives would be on the way to recording an unlikely recovery. Now Fuff and Sylvain Legwinski really began to show their defensive qualities and with many of the St Ives attacking moves uncoordinated the St Neots goal survived without too many scares. Their best chance fell to Scott Fielding after the St Neots keeper had been beaten to the ball outside his area but the striker's lob towards the unguarded goal was wide.

St Neots: Crockett, Dogbe, Jon Hall, Hyem, Fuff, Legwinski, Kenneford, Knight, Fox, Okechukwu, Abraham.

Subs: James Hall (for Abraham 72 mins), Swain (for Okechukwu 84 minutes), Bannister and Conroy-Owen.

MOM: Michael Hyem