

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

UCL Premier Division  
**St Neots Town 3 Newport Pagnell 0**

St Neots christened their new home with a opening day debut UCL victory that was even more convincing than the final score line suggests. Newport Pagnell were a tidy well organised side but they created too few chances to seriously threatened St Neots chances of a deserved victory but Manager Marvin Johnson whilst being delighted with the win will no doubt have picked up some very useful pointers for the future. In midfield Luke Knight had both colleagues and opponents dancing to his tune whilst behind him Jon Hoggett was always available to link up with the next attacking move. With Luigi Rocco and Declan Rogers terrorising the visiting full backs there could have been more goals whilst defensively Jon Chatfield and his defenders can be pleased with their afternoon's work and a clean sheet. However it is far too early to get carried away but this was a solid and confident performance that will have pleased players and fans (all 221 of them) alike.

In the first ten minutes St Neots previewed what was to come with a very impressive start and three early goal scoring chances. The Referee played a great advantage when Pete Okechukwu was fouled and that resulted in Ben Dyett bringing an excellent save from visiting keeper James Howarth. Luigi Rocco then fired over the bar from a Declan Rogers cross to the far post and Luke Knight had a net bound shot deflected for a corner. The first chance created by the visitors came after eleven minutes when Jon Chatfield tipped away a low shot by Drew Mitten but as the early momentum subsided the visitors should have gone ahead when the St Neots defence were caught out of position and a Rob Tapp cross picked out the unmarked Danny Nichols who skied his shot over the bar with only Chatfield to beat. The closest to a first half goal came six minutes before the break when following a neat move involving Steve Dogbe and Jon Hoggett, Luke Knight unleashed a great shot to beat the keeper only to see the ball rebound from a post.

The first UCL goal at the new Rowley Park came after 50 minutes. Appropriately man of the match Luke Knight found Luigi Rocco on the right and he bamboozled his way past his marker to net with an angled shot that the keeper just failed to save. The goal released the tension and from that point St Neots dominated. The hard working Okechukwu twice produced shots narrowly wide of their target but he was to be rewarded after 65 minutes when he produced a spectacular diving header at the far post to convert a cross from Kevin McElroy to double St Neots' lead. The pressure on the Pagnell goal continued with Kevin McElroy bringing a good save from Howarth at the expense of a corner and then after 74 minutes one of the training ground corner kick moves led to Knight's pin point cross finding the head of Pete Okechukwu and he finished with a flourish to complete the scoring and leave Pagnell looking a well beaten side. There could easily have been further goals because in one move Barry Albone who had never really impressed might have twice added to the score. Firstly he saw a shot hacked off the line by John Thorpe and then his header beat the keeper but rebounded from the cross bar. Several substitutions saw the game slow but Jon Chatfield will have been delighted to maintain his clean sheet with a double save to deny Pagnell a late consolation goal and the visitors frustrations surfaced at the end with Richard Armstrong being their second player to pick up an opening day yellow card.

**Saints:** Chatfield, McElroy (D), McElroy (K), Hoggett Dogbe, Dyett, Knight, Albone, Okechukwu, Rocco, Rogers.

**Subs:** James Hall (for Okechukwu 74 mins), Bannister (for Knight 85 mins), Kenneford (for Rogers 85 mins), Jon Hall & Webster

**Man of the Match:** Luke Knight