

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

F.A. Cup
St Neots Town 2 Lincoln United 3

Saints brief FA Cup run came to an end against higher ranked Lincoln United but they went down fighting as they nearly, and should have, turned a 3 nil deficit into a draw at least.

Both teams started patiently, obviously trying to get the measure of each other and the first real effort on goal didn't come until the 9th minute when Luke Knight shot wide from 25 yards. Three minutes later, however, the home side found themselves a goal down as Gary Walters turned, wrong footed the defence and easily slotted the ball past Jon Chatfield from about 15 yards. Saints tried to respond and Luigi Rocco forced Ziccardi to push the ball behind for a corner as he shot from the right hand side of the box. Unfortunately, St Neots could not seem to get the fluency and pace into their game and Lincoln started to dominate proceedings. Wilkinson miscued one effort and then Chatfield was forced to make a save from Porter. The visitors were not to be denied and, despite Chatfield being able to block the initial shot, Sam Wilkinson was on hand to take advantage of some poor defending to score Lincoln's second goal after 25 minutes.

Stung by this, Saints at last started to up the tempo and Matt Kenneford almost charged down keeper Ziccardi's clearance. However, Lincoln nearly added to their tally when Creane couldn't get enough on dangerous corner before a fine move saw Kev McElroy's cross almost result in a goal for St Neots on 35 minutes. The last 10 minutes of the half saw Ziccardi brought more and more into the action with two saves from Kenneford and another from Rocco who also shot just over the bar.

Saints started the second period with Ben Webster replacing Chatfield who was unwell and the team carrying on from where they had finished the 1st half. Declan Rogers broke through on the left hand side of the box and his effort rebounded from the post as Ziccardi was beaten. Ziccardi was then forced to tip over a back header from his own player (Creane) before Luke Knight had another effort deflected for a corner. The Lincoln keeper then had to save from Kenneford who then left the action as Manager Marvin Johnson substituted him and Rogers, bringing on Peter Okechukwu and James Hall in the 62nd minute.

Hall had an immediate impact as his forceful run down the left saw his cross scrambled away before Saints were stunned by a third goal although there was some controversy in this as Steve Dogbe was clearly fouled in the build up to the goal as Lincoln broke through. Ben Webster made a great save but the ball fell to Wilkinson who scored his second goal of the contest on 66 minutes. Two minutes later, Saints were offered a lifeline as Rocco's cross was handled in the box and the Assistant Linesman immediately flagged for a penalty. Unfortunately, although Knight's shot was hit with plenty of power, it hit the diving Ziccardi's legs and was cleared away.

Saints kept going forward and were really stretching Lincoln down the flanks. Their efforts were rewarded on 79 minutes Hall crossed from the left and "Pistol Pete" Okechukwu reacted quickly and lobbed the ball over the on-rushing Lincoln keeper. A minute later Hall finished weakly before a quick break from a Lincoln corner saw him make amends with another cross which saw Okechukwu score his second of the game. The striker nearly scored again a minute later before Walters chipped the ball past Webster but also past the goal in the 1st minute of injury time. Urged on by the crowd, Saints finished the game on top and should have equalised deep into extra time when, firstly, Jon Hoggett seemed to have a clear shooting opportunity and, secondly, when Okechukwu fed Hall who allowed the keeper to save when he should have done better.

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Saints: Chatfield, D McElroy, K McElroy, Hoggett, Dogbe, Dyett, Knight, Bannister, Kenneford, Rocco, Rogers

Subs: Okechukwu (for Rogers), James Hall (for Kenneford), Jon Hall, Granville, Webster (for Chatfield)

MOM: Rocco