

12th April 2008

LATE GOAL RESCUES TAUPO

The Finn MacCuhals Taupo football team played their "get out of jail" card at an extremely late stage of last Saturday's game away against Otumoetai in the Waikato Bay of Plenty Federation League, as they snatched a 1 – all draw.

The game was affected by a strong breeze blowing the length of the field, the surface of which was not the best due to the extended dry spell.

The home team used the wind to their advantage in the first half using the long ball to good effect. Taupo defended well but found it hard to construct anything when they did get the ball and were limited to a few half chances as the game deteriorated as a spectacle. Despite having the territorial advantage Otumoetai created few chances throughout and Taupo were happy to go in all square at the break.

Despite the second half advantage of the wind, Taupo were able to make little headway against a determined defensive display by the home team. They were however denied the opportunity to go ahead when Gaetano Dedual was felled a good metre inside the penalty area after a good run. The referee instead chose to award a free kick on the edge of the box and the wall held firm. Games turn on decisions like these and the inevitable happened minutes later. In the 56th minute following a long spell of pressure by Taupo, the visitor's defence nodded off for an instant. The Otumoetai striker took full advantage with an unopposed run on goal and he comfortably beat Ryan Paumier to score the opening goal.

The goal lifted the home team and they worked extremely hard, closing down the Taupo players and putting pressure on the ball. Attack after attack foundered on the staunch defensive line around the edge of the box and anything that did get through was dealt with by the experienced home keeper Tony Chegwidan.

With the referee having played four minutes of injury time and just when it seemed that Taupo were about to lose their first Federation League game since July 2005, and end a run of 36 games unbeaten, the goal finally came. Paul Drake stepped up and bent a free kick from wide on the left, across the face of goal and inside the far post for a last gasp equalizer much to the relief of his team-mates.

It was a hard earned point and more than a few teams will struggle when they visit Otumoetai this year. To their credit the Taupo team never gave up and in the end deserved their equalizer on effort alone. The work rate of the Taupo team could not be faulted, but the team is struggling to gel and with some of their more experienced players missing due to injury this is inevitable. However the team must learn to work smarter rather than harder and may still struggle until they do so.

There were strong games from Ben Westerman, Mark Jones and Drake but Coach Simon Foy singled out the hardworking Steve Painter for the Finn MacCuhals man of the match award.

Team: Ryan Paumier, Sam Brown (Rex Mincher 85mins), Raymond How, Cam McGrath, Gaetano Dedual (Robbie Williams 59mins), Paul Drake, Ben Westerman, Mark Jones, Steve Painter, Jesse Smith, Pablo Garcia.

Other results: Claudelands Rovers 3 Te Awamutu 2, Hamilton Wanderers 1 Ngaruawahia 0, Matamata 4 Ngongotaha 0, Otorohanga 6 Huntly Thistle 0, Rotorua United 2 Tauranga City United 1, Whakatane Town 1 Melville 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Matamata	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Melville	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Otumoetai	2	1	1	0	4	1	4
Finn MacCuhals TAUPO	2	1	1	0	3	1	4
Claudelands Rovers	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Otorohanga	2	1	0	1	7	3	3
Tauranga City United	2	1	0	1	5	4	3
Te Awamutu	2	1	0	1	4	4	3
Rotorua United	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Hamilton Wanderers	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Ngaruawahia	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Whakatane Town	2	0	0	2	3	7	0
Ngongataha	2	0	0	2	0	7	0
Huntly Thistle	2	0	0	2	0	9	0

The Westerman Property Solutions Taupo Reserves continued their good start to the season with a comfortable 6 – 2 win over Otumoetai Special Reserves in the Bay of Plenty Division 2 game at Crown Park.

Goals were scored by Jeremy Gadd (2), Joel Poppe (2), Clint McCormick and Grant Treloar.

Next Saturday, the Federation League team have a hugely important game when they host bitter rivals and current table toppers Matamata at Crown Park. Matamata have yet to concede a goal and Taupo may still be without the influential Alan Lamb who makes such a huge difference to the team when he play, but is struggling with a calf injury. With the Federation Shield on the line in the game also, it is doubly important that Taupo put last week's below par performance behind them. The game will kick off at 2.45pm.

The Taupo Reserve team will travel for the first time this season, to play Old Blues Reserves in Tauranga, with that game kicking off at the earlier time of 12.30pm.

The Taupo Lock & Alarm Lakers social team will start their season in the Rotorua Businesshouse competition with a game in Rotorua on Sunday against Hospital. The team will meet at Finns at 12 midday to travel to Rotorua for a 2pm kick off.

Gordon Williams
0274 733 763
williamsg@landcorp.co.nz